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# A CONFESSION OF FAITH FOR THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN

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M. R. FLEMING

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# A Confession of Faith For the Average Christian

BY

M. R. FLEMING, B. D., Ph. D.



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TO MY WIFE

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1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The paper then discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States in the context of the world. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the world and its people.

## FOREWORD

ONE of the greatest needs of the church of today is a membership that is acquainted with the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Much has been said about the importance of conduct rather than belief by those who contend that it matters not what the individual thinks so long as he lives a good life; but the fact remains that it is impossible to separate faith and conduct. A man's creed, written or unwritten, is his working theory of life. Minds are confused and energy dissipated because the average Christian has no clear conception of what the Bible really teaches about the plan of salvation.

I cannot accept the statement that people are no longer interested in doctrines, and that they will listen to nothing that is not "practical;" for experience shows that men and women are intensely interested in sermons and addresses that explain the great themes of the Scriptures in terms that can be understood by the average layman. In my ministry to a congregation of ordinary men and women I find that doctrinal sermons are appreciated by Christian and non-Christian. Many express gratitude for help received from material similar to that given in this book.

Numerous confessions of faith and books on dogmatic and systematic theology are in circulation; but almost all of them have been written for the theologian and

scholar. The average member of the church can neither become interested in their philosophical discussions, nor will he take time to examine the numerous Scripture references. These chapters have been written in response to a plea from ministers who are seeking material that may help them in the preparation of a series of talks on these essential doctrines of the church, and in response to a plea for an extended confession of faith that will both interest and instruct the average Christian. The purpose of the author will be fulfilled, if they form a working creed that will guard earnest men and women against false doctrines, and thus make the readers more efficient servants of Christ and His Church.

M. R. F.

Baltimore, Maryland, May 9, 1916.

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*"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." I Peter 3:15.*

## THE BIBLE

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Timothy 3:16-17.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 Peter 1:20-21.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."—I. Thessalonians 2:13.

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."—I Corinthians 2:13.

"Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known to them Thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses Thy servant."—Nehemiah 9:13-14.

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you."—Deut. 4:2.

"Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."—Acts 1:16.

"Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—Matthew 5:18.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—Psalm 119:105.

## THE BIBLE

### THE GREATEST BOOK IN THE WORLD

**T**HE Bible holds a unique place in the world's literature. Although it was completed more than eighteen hundred years ago, today it holds a more prominent position in the minds and lives of men than any other book that was ever written. Read at first by despised Hebrews and humble Christians, it has come to grip the minds of scholars and leaders in all professions, until few educated persons are willing to confess ignorance of its message. Other books come and go, they are honored for a short time and then forgotten; but the Bible increases in power and usefulness with each passing day. Each year finds a large increase in the demand for copies of the Scriptures; and leaders in all walks of life hasten to show their respect for this ancient Book. Our English word "Bible" comes from two Greek words, "biblos" and "biblion," which mean "book." But it is not sufficient to think of it merely as a book. It is THE BOOK, the greatest book in the world.

Efforts have been made to compare the literature of other religions with the teachings of the Scriptures. Intelligent men and women will not deny that there are truths of a high order in the written oracles of Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hin-

duism, and Mohammedanism. At the same time, true scholarship must grant that the Bible holds a distinct primacy among all sacred books. Compared with the writings of Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Robert Browning, it outshines them as the sun outshines the moon which has but reflected glory. They owe much of their beauty and power to the past and present influence of the Bible.

All other sacred books contain both truth and error, while the Bible contains nothing but the truth. In the ethnic scriptures the gold of moral truth is combined with such a mass of comparatively worthless material that it holds but a minor place. Put the moral ideas of Socrates, Confucius, and others along side those found in the New Testament, and they will seem as nursery stories by the side of the best philosophy. No one will deny that there are occasional jewels among the teachings of those men, but, as Joseph Cook has well said, they are "jewels picked out of the mud."

The Bible not only contains all the excellencies of all other literature, but it also contains more truth and beauty than all other books combined. Select all the beautiful and helpful thoughts from all literature of ancient and modern times and make them into a volume. Placing it along side the Scriptures, you will find that it cannot compare with the Sacred Volume that has been the handbook of the church in all these years of conflict and victory. Of practically all first-class modern literature it may be said that it owes its beauty and force to quotations and thoughts that have been gleaned

or borrowed from the Bible. Were a person for the first time to read the Bible, and then compare it with other books, he would be compelled to confess that it has no equal in any language. It is the greatest book in the world today or in any day.

#### MORE THAN A MAN-MADE BOOK

How then shall we explain the superiority of this book over all others? Is it sufficient to say that the men who wrote it, or collected the different parts, were the most intelligent and scholarly men of the ages, and that they deserve a special place among the world's scholars? To my mind that is not sufficient. There is only one way to explain the remarkable superiority of this volume over all others. It is not man's book, but it is God's book. It originated, not in the minds of mere men but in the mind of the omniscient and eternal God. It surpasses all the works of men because its Author surpasses all the members of the human family. It defies comparison because the Lord defies comparison with imperfect and dying humanity.

There are numerous reasons why we are led to believe that this is more than a human book. The first is found in its unity. It consists of sixty-six books, written by more than thirty different writers, extending in the period of its composition over a period of about sixteen hundred years. It was written in three languages, in different lands, by men on almost every plane of social life, from the herdsman and fisherman to the king upon the throne. It is a library of books

of history, biography, lyric poetry, epic poetry, philosophical essays, personal letters, and apocalypses. Each writer has a special message for his age, and reflects the age in which he lived. He speaks the language of his day and speaks so that the men of his day may understand him and profit by what he says. In this conglomeration there is perfect agreement and unity of thought and purpose, so that the book is a perfect unit from beginning to end.

This unity is the more remarkable when we realize that it is not intentional on the part of the different writers. Had St. John desired to write in obvious harmony with the first three writers of the New Testament, he would not have permitted himself to insert so many things that at first sight seem to contradict them. If St. Paul and St. James had regarded themselves as contributors to a book, rather than authors of a book, they would not have used such apparently divergent language concerning the place of faith and works in the plan of salvation. How then are we to explain this striking agreement between these thirty or more men who wrote with no attempt at unity or harmony? Why does the portrait of Christ in the Gospel by John harmonize so curiously with the stories given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke? How can we explain the underlying unity in the epistles of James and Paul? For me there is but one satisfactory explanation—the Bible is not the work of man so much as the work of the Lord. It is more than a human book.

The second reason for believing that it is more than a volume of articles written by different men is found in the wisdom that is too deep for man. A book that man can produce man can exhaust, but all the men of all the ages have not been able to reveal all the hidden and inexhaustible treasures of the Scriptures. Thousands of books have been devoted to its exposition, but none have reached the bottom of that rich mine, whose wealth increases with the enlightenment of the race. When George Müller had read it one hundred times he said that each time he read the entire book he found it fresher and richer.

Long before the established theories of modern science had been set forth it gave the same truth accurately. A great German scientist has said that Moses was a wonderful geologist, wherever he got his knowledge. Carefully examine the first chapter of Genesis, and you will find that more than a thousand years before science set forth the order of creation, the Bible gave the same order. Hundreds of years before the telescope had revealed the millions of stars in the heavens, the Book of Job informed us that "the stars are beyond the number to be counted." When men were thinking that the world rested on a solid base, and others supposed it was resting on the shoulders of some mighty giant, the Scriptures said, "God hangeth the earth on nothing."

Human wisdom and foresight sometimes read the signs of the times enough to see clearly events about to come, but man has never been able to demonstrate

such wisdom as is shown in the prophecies of the Old Testament. It named Cyrus long before he was born, and said he would be sent to destroy Babylon. The destruction of Baylon, Tyre, Greece, Rome, and Egypt were set forth in a day when those nations were at the height of their power, and in some instances when they were moving toward what seemed to be greater things. Hundreds of years before the coming of the Prince of Peace His birth was proclaimed even to the city in which He was born, and the town in which He was to make His home. References to fulfilled prophecies are so numerous that space will not permit me to mention them. If you are seeking a sign of the truth of the New Testament prophecies, consider the Jews who are now scattered to all quarters of the world.

In the third place, no human authorship could account for its influence on the world. The only way to get a clear idea of the world without this book is to consider the highest civilization without it. Rome marked the height to which humanity without a Bible ascended; for it was there that free and untrammelled thought and fullest intellectual liberty were found. Witness Nero murdering all who entrusted themselves to his friendship and mercy, even down to his own mother and wives. Witness the age in which Tertulian said people married only to be divorced, an age when friends exchanged wives, and infanticide and other hellish crimes were common. Witness the arena wet with the red blood of gladiators and innocent women. Witness the women and girls of the city as they lightly

gave the sign of death and took delight in the awful scenes that mingled the blood of beasts and human beings with the sand and dirt of the arena. Then remember that Rome boasted the highest civilization apart from that of the Hebrews, who enjoyed the possession of the Old Testament. We are accustomed to compare non-Christian lands with lands where the Bible is read today; but we must remember that the leaven of the Bible has leavened the whole world in a greater or lesser degree.

In this day there is more power in the Scriptures to save men, purify, gladden, and beautify lives, than in all other literature combined. A stream never rises higher than its source. A book that has power to lift fallen men and women out of sin into the presence of God must have come down from God as has no other book. It is true that other books exert a mighty power for good; but that power is derived from quotations and thought borrowed from the Scriptures.

John Newton may be an infidel and a libertine, he may sell his fellows into slavery; but when he reads the Bible he is transformed into a Christian minister and hymn writer. A river thief finds a portion of the Bible, and, reading it, becomes a sober man and a worker for the salvation of others. Multiplied thousands witness to the fact that the Scriptures have been the means of changing the whole trend of their lives. What other book can call such a roll of witnesses? Can we explain that kind of work on the basis of human inspiration and planning?

Were those who know Theodore Roosevelt best and understand his writings best to be practically unanimous in their belief that he wrote a certain book, a man would have little right to claim that he did not write the book, unless the doubter could tell who did write it. Show me a man who has fully surrendered his life to the Lord Jesus Christ, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, yea, in practically every case, I will show you that the man believes that the Bible is not man's book but God's book. Show me the man who rejects all thought of the divine authorship, and you will have a man who is not in close fellowship with the Lord. The nearer men live to God the firmer are they in the belief that He is the Author of this book; the farther they get away from Him the more confident are they that He did not write it. The man who knows me best is best prepared to know whether I wrote a certain production. The men who know the Lord best say He is the Author of the Bible.

Another reason why I believe that the Bible is not the result of unaided human reason is because it has constantly won the victory over all its enemies. It has always had its enemies. No sooner was it completed than men tried to stamp it out. Edicts were issued with all the power of the Roman Empire behind them, demanding that every Bible should be burned and every person having a Bible should be put to death. During the past eighteen centuries every invention that human philosophy, science, and wit could bring to bear has been thrown against the old book to stamp it out. Had

any other book been treated thus it would have been destroyed long ago; but the Bible stands firmer and holds a higher place than ever.

In Hawthorne's "Earth's Holocaust" all was committed to the flame and a book was thrown in which refused to be consumed, but sent up unusual splendors and burned but did not consume. It was the Bible. That is a splendid parable of the Scriptures. Criticism only makes them stronger and gives them a firmer hold on the lives of men and women. Remarkable are the many attacks that have been made upon the Bible, and even more remarkable are the many victories it has won over its enemies.

Professor Lyell, the great English geologist says, "In the year 1808 the French Institute enumerated no less than eighty geological theories which were hostile to the Scriptures, but not one of these theories is held today." Audacious critics may advance theory after theory to overthrow the integrity of the Word, and the weak may lose faith for a time; but with the coming of more light all such theories are put to flight and the Bible continues to stand as the best loved and most widely read book in the world. Subject any other book to one-tenth of this criticism and attack, and it will soon pass into the land of the forgotten. On the other hand the Bible moves forward in the respect of the world because it is God's message to the world; and it will continue to conquer enemies until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and the Christ.

## PLENARY INSPIRATION

In Paul's second letter to Timothy he writes that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The word inspired means literally "God-breathed." It is composed of two Greek words, "Theos" which means "God," and "pnein" which means "to breathe." The Bible is the result of divine inbreathing just as human speech is uttered by breathing through the mouth. When we say that the Bible is inspired, we mean that God spoke through men, and that it is His word just as much as though He spoke it with His own lips.

During the past fifteen centuries many theories of inspiration have been set forth by different scholars. At this time it is not my purpose to discuss those different views. Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." I know that the American Revised Version renders 2 Timothy 3:16: "Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." I have high respect for the members of that committee, and consider the American Revised Version one of the best translations ever made; but let it be remembered that by no means all the members of that committee agreed to this translation of "2 Timothy 3:16." There are several reasons for believing that the rendering is erroneous. In the first place, it is tautological. In the second place, it is a clear violation of the Greek syntax. Bishop Middleton challenged the production of a single instance in the com-

pass of the whole Greek language where such a violent divulsion of two adjectives as there are in this verse could be found and justified. The challenge remains unanswered. This revised rendering is just what the rationalists have desired; but by no means all the rationalists are willing to abuse the Greek language to reach such an unjustified rendering. The great rationalistic scholar, DeWette, confessed candidly that the rendering of this verse by the revisers cannot be defended. Bishops Moberly and Wordsworth, Archbishop Trench, and other eminent scholars on the committee disclaimed all responsibility for the rendering. Dean Burgon pronounced it "the most astonishing as well as calamitous literary blunder of the age." Dr. S. P. Tregelles, the only man ever pensioned by the British government for scholarship, condemned the rendering. Supported by such eminent scholars and the leading evangelical Christians in all ages, the average Christian may well hold to the Saint James Version when it translates: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Jesus placed His stamp of approval on the idea that the Old Testament was inspired of God, and said, "One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Old Testament and New Testament alike contain many passages that might be quoted to prove that the writers themselves felt they were

writing under the power of the Spirit of the Lord.

I believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, that the inspiration extends to all subjects, to all the statements and sentences, that the whole Bible is the word of God, and therefore true and authoritative. This does not of necessity mean that each verse is a verbatim report or a mechanical recording of individual words. That would be robbing the writers of their individuality, and making them mere machines. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit used the memories, the intuitions, the judgments, and even the idiosyncrasies of the several writers, so that while each book reflects the writer it is also accurate in its account of events and in its message of salvation. Matthew and John may record the events in different phraseology, but each writes under the inspiration of God, and is correct in every detail.

Certain words were written down just as the Spirit of God dictated them to the individual, and others were chosen by the individual to record the message that he received. For instance, the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor, found in the second and third chapters of Revelation, were dictated by the Spirit of the Lord. In John 11:49-52 we are told that when Caiaphas declared that it was expedient for one to die for the nation, and that the whole nation perish not, "This spake he not of himself." Take the story of Balaam in the 22 and 23 chapters of Numbers. It is clear that the selfish prophet wanted to speak different from what he did, but he was obliged to utter what

the Lord put in his mouth. Take Saul in 1 Samuel 10:10 and 19:20-24. It is evident that there was an inspiration of the very words at that time. On the day of Pentecost the disciples spake with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. These are only a few of the references that might be given to show that on certain occasions the Lord gave the words as well as the thoughts.

Matthew 3:17 says: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Mark 1:11 gives the same story in the words: "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Luke 3:22 differs from them both, reading: "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." The accounts of the Last Supper given in Matthew 26:26-27, and Luke 22:19-20 show that different words are used to express the same truth. In these instances we are led to believe that the thought was inspired, but the writer was left to select his own words in giving the account.

Let us not make the mistake of supposing that the words were not affected by the inspiration; for it is scarcely possible to insure correct transmission of thought without in some manner affecting the words. Yet they were not always affected directly and immediately by being dictated in the ears of the writers, but indirectly through the inbreathing on the mind,

producing such vivid and clear ideas of thoughts and facts that the writers could find the exact words for their purpose. While the Holy Spirit gave the communication, the words and language were such as the individual would naturally have chosen. Thus the Bible is in deed and in truth the very word of God, that is the revelation of God to His creatures, truly divine, and at the same time truly human, in that it was written by human hands. To put it in a single sentence, the Lord is responsible for every sentence and every word in the original writing.

Care must be taken lest we suppose that the writers were always inspired in their conduct as well as in their writings. Inspiration was only theirs at the time when they penned the sacred oracles, and at other times they erred in thought and conduct. It was the purpose of God to inspire the books rather than the instrument that He used to compose those books.

An objection often made to this theory is that there are many things in the Bible that cannot claim divine approval. It must ever be kept in mind that the Lord did not speak every word, but that He caused every word to be recorded. The Scriptures contain words uttered by Satan, words uttered by false prophets, words of the enemies of the Lord, words of good men in hours of weakness and sin. But in a peculiar sense they are God's words, because He caused them to be recorded for our profit. He does not approve the sentiment, but records them to warn us against such sentiments and conduct.

Attention is constantly called to what seem to be contradictions and errors. These seeming faults have been explained satisfactorily in the past, and any one who is honest in his search for light can find this explanation. There is no reason why I should go into detail to explain them at this time. Perhaps we may find a few slight imperfections in the Bible as we now have it. We are not contending that the translators, transcribers, and revisers were inspired so as to insure infallibility, any more than we claim infallibility for the members of the American Revision Committee. It is enough for the average Christian to hold that the original writings came through the penman direct from the Lord. The copyist may have made a mistake in writing a Hebrew numeral that causes doubt to spring up in the mind of some scholar.

Then why should we put faith in our modern Bible, if there is a faint possibility that there is a difference from the original word of God? The answer is found in the statement of scholars, who, after careful examination of all the available manuscripts of all ages and countries, say that not one single various reading has been discovered that can throw doubt upon any passage that was before considered certain or decisive in favor of any important doctrine. The different readings, almost without an exception, leave untouched the essential parts of a sentence, and only interfere with points of secondary interest and of secondary importance. Competent scholars declare that in the New Testament at least 999 out of every 1,000 words are the

same as in the original parchment. So far as any matter that touches our working creed is concerned we have the very Bible as it was inspired by the omnipotent God. The average child of God can open his Bible and feel that he is reading the message that the Spirit of God moved the penman of the past to write for that ordinary follower of Christ.

Some earnest souls have been confused by the statement that the leading educators of the world do not believe that the entire Bible is inspired. Call the roll of the leading churchmen of this and other days, and you will find that the distinguished leaders with few exceptions believed that the Bible is the word of God. Dr. Sanday, of Oxford, Professor Orr, of Glasgow, Principal Forsyth, of Hackney College, the Archbishop of Durham, Sir Robert Anderson, President Patton, of Princeton, G. Frederick Wright and Albert T. Clay, the archeologists, Arthur T. Pierson, C. I. Scofield, and other leading educators might be named to show that the very highest scholarship in the world can be placed on the side of those who believe that the entire Bible is the word of God.

The final authorities in this matter, so far as the average Christian is concerned, ought to be the men who are engaged in religious work, and who are accomplishing the best results in that work. Run down the list of the great soul-winners, and you will find that they believe in the full inspiration of the Bible. Here is found the secret of much of the success that crowned the work of D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey,

J. Wilbur Chapman, Gypsy Smith, William Sunday, Campbell Morgan, Charles Spurgeon, A. C. Dixon, and other leaders in the evangelistic field. When we notice that the Lord puts His richest blessing on the work of the men who hold this view when it comes to saving lost men and women, the work for which Christ died on the cross, it is a pretty good sign that the Gospel they preach is the Gospel He honors. Dr. James M. Gray says it is well to challenge the whole Christian world for the name of a man who stands out as a winner of souls who does not believe in the inspiration of every part of the Bible. Can the average Christian make a mistake in accepting what these great men of God believe concerning the Scriptures?

#### THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST

Like the Holy Spirit the Bible does not glorify itself but the Christ. It does not ask so much, "What think ye of the Bible?" as, "What think ye of Christ?" Primarily it is not a history, a book of poetry, or a philosophical discussion; but it is a revelation of God and His dealing with the human race. Everything else is used only because it helps to show the ways of God with men, because it enables the reader to understand the story of the unfolding of the plan of salvation. It is necessary to keep this thought in mind, if the Scriptures are to mean what the Lord intends they should mean to the average member of the kingdom of God.

There are those who glibly say, "Not the Bible, but

the Christ is the heart of our hope." That sounds well when it is first heard, but, like so many of those glib sayings, it loses its force when it is examined more closely. We are dependent upon the Bible for our knowledge of God in Christ. Outside that book we have little knowledge of what Christ was while in the world or what He is to us at this moment. Apart from the biblical story there is just enough said to place Him in history as an actual person; but there is by no means enough to enable the world to know Him in all His love and power. The only literature about the Savior that is authentic is the Bible, and the books that derive their information from it.

He is at the center of the entire Bible. Without Him the Old Testament loses its beauty and power. He is foreshadowed in the entire old dispensation. He is the prophet, priest, and king, of whom all are but symbols. Apart from Him it loses its worth and unity.

The New Testament looks to Him for its meaning. The first four books constitute the story of His life in the world. The Book of Acts records the beginnings of His spiritual presence among men, revolutionizing their ideals, changing their character, and starting that influence that is to transfer the world from Satan to God. The Epistles contain the great doctrines of Christ and His church, which means nothing apart from its Founder. The Book of Revelation is prophetic of His final unveiling.

Apart from the biblical portrayal of God as revealed in Christ the world has no adequate conception of

the character of God. At the time when other nations had multitudes and varying orders of gods, it revealed to us an all-powerful and eternal Deity. While other religions place emphasis on cleverness, wealth, power, and beauty, it tells us that God is holy and righteous, and that He seeks holiness and righteousness in His children. Other religions portray the gods as disinterested and remote, but this book tells of a loving Presence and a sympathetic heavenly Father who loves us with a love that surpasses the love of the kindest earthly parent for his children. Remove the Scriptures from the world, and you rob the world of its only true conception of the Lord.

#### FINDS MAN AT EVERY MOMENT OF HIS LIFE

While the primary function of the Bible is to reveal God and His will to us, the second function is to fit us for every moment of life. It finds us in every experience, and fits us completely for every emergency. It is a light to guide us into all truth. The Psalmist wrote: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Where it is read and obeyed there need be no darkness, for it instructs how to walk in the paths of righteousness and peace.

It is food for the soul, nourishing the inner life of all who are candidates for the heavenly mansions. In the hour of temptation Jesus said to the Tempter: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

During the same wilderness experience Christ used

the Scripture as a weapon to defeat Satan. In the epistle to the Ephesians Paul tells us to put on the whole armour of God, part of which is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. No one need be defeated by sin and Satan, if he will but make the Bible his companion. In the hour of joy and in the hour of sorrow it is the book that will meet every need and lead us toward heaven.

Unlike most books it points out our weakness and guilt as well as our strength and virtues. It is a microscope to reveal the smallest sins that hide within the heart. It is a mirror in which we can see ourselves as the Lord sees us. It is profitable for reproof and correction. When you are tempted to be pleased with self, look into this mirror and you will see what God says about your heart and life.

Having pointed out our weakness and guilt, it does what is better, it points us to restoration and newness of life. It does not require so much wisdom to point out sin as it does to show the remedy for that sin. The Bible meets the worst sinner at the point of deepest guilt and shame, and leads him to cleansing and hope. It leads him from Satan and perdition to Christ and everlasting blessedness.

It supplies all our wants during all the hours of life; it is a lamp to lead us into the paths of righteousness and peace; it is an armour to protect us from the darts of sin and Satan; it meets us in every moment of our lives and equips us for every experience of life. Then when we come to the end of the journey and

tremble on the brink of the river of death its message illuminates the way and removes the fear of making the great adventure. On a death-bed there is no book that can compare with this book. No words are more fitting for the close of a life than a quotation from the Bible.

It was the book that held the highest place in the life of our Lord. He was a diligent student of it all His days. He heard it in the home of His childhood; He listened to it in the synagogue, He committed its verses to memory. When He began to preach His words were saturated with it, and through it He put His enemies to shame. With it He fought the great enemy in the wilderness and won the victory. In His dying hour it was upon his lips. To those, who, like the Master hide it in their hearts, it is a present help in every hour of need. If we want to lean upon it in the hour of death, we ought to make it the man of our counsel each day of our lives.

When the average Christian begins to make his confession of faith the first step is to accept the entire Bible as the Word of God. The second step is to make that word the rule of his life, looking to it constantly for light, food, and protection. Each article of his creed should be taken from the Book rather than from human wisdom, which is never infallible. The confession of faith that is true to the Bible is the only confession of faith that will stand the test of the years.



GOD

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."—Genesis 1:1.

"Thou art Jehovah, even Thou alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee."—Nehemiah 9:6 (R. V.)

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever."—I Timothy 1:17.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting. Thou art God."—Psalm 90:2.

"Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."—Psalm 135:6.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."—Proverbs 15:3.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."—John 4:24.

"The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord; but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness."—Proverbs 15:9.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."—Psalm 10:8.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"—Matthew 7:11.

## GOD

### CONDUCT DETERMINED BY OUR IDEA OF GOD

**A** MAN'S idea of what men ought to be is determined largely by his idea of what God is. The essence of all religion is yielding of self to the Lord as we know Him. Since men try to mould their lives to please the divinity they serve, it may be said that the character of any religion is determined by its definition of the Supreme Being.

The early Hebrews thought of Jehovah as a national Deity, Who was in a special sense interested in them, and indifferent to the welfare of all other peoples. Naturally their religion became national and exclusive; others might come to serve the Lord, but only after they had first become Israelites. They felt that it was their duty to act in a certain manner toward the members of their own race, and in another manner toward foreigners. Their view of God caused them to act as though He was pleased when they prospered and when other nations met disaster and suffering.

Later they were impressed with the holiness and majesty of Jehovah. It was then that reverence and awe held a prominent place in all their worship. Washings and ceremonies were necessary in order that they might prepare themselves to approach the sanctuary where that holy and righteous Being was worshipped. Sitting away off in the heavens, speaking through the

thunder and lightening, jealous of His honor, they saw their Divinity holding prosperity for the man who kept the minutest detail of the law and curses for the one who was lax in his devotion to the most insignificant item. In later years Jesus condemned them because they went to childish extremes in their efforts to meet every requirement of the Hexateuch and the Traditions of the Fathers.

The Pilgrim Fathers in New England caught a similar view in the early years of American history. They looked upon the Lord as an infinite and majestic Being Who predestined some to eternal day and others to everlasting night. To their minds Jehovah was displeased with any levity or laughter. The result is seen in the sternness and quiet dignity that marked the sturdy Puritan character.

The opposite view portrays the Lord as nothing but tumultuous sentiment, always weeping over rebellious men, and having naught but love for saint and sinner alike, too good and kind to permit anyone to suffer punishment for sin. On this theory is built a conduct that is far from commendable, because men feel that somehow or other they will finally be given the same reward whether they live in unrighteousness or in the fear of the Lord.

Then there is the golden mean which describes the Creator as a holy and righteous Being, Who cannot look with pleasure or allowance upon any kind of disobedience, and Who is so just that He must of necessity punish all sin; but Who loves the sinner and is anxious

that all men turn from evil and find life eternal. Those who hold this view try to live a pure life, and trust in the Lord for pardon for repented sin.

Consciously or unconsciously almost all men seek a God whom they may know and serve. Give a man the iron muscles of a Samson, the intellect of a Socrates, the glory of a Solomon, the power of an Alexander The Great, and the wealth of a Croesus; yet will he seek something or someone to love and serve. In the palace or in the wilderness men cry for a power or a being that is higher than themselves. Rob the savage of the knowledge of a personal Deity; and he will go out into the forest or quarry and make himself an object to worship. Bowing down before that image of wood or stone, he will worship and depart to live a life that in his mind gives pleasure to that object.

The conduct of no nation rises higher than the thought that nation has of its God. The conduct of an individual cannot be expected to be any better than the idea he holds of the One he worships. The value of any religion depends upon its conception of the Being to be worshipped.

#### PERSONAL AND ETERNAL GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

Since almost all men in all ages and in all parts of the world have believed and do believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, it is scarcely necessary to argue

for the existence of a God. Were this not true, experience proves that this kind of argument generally leads to confusion, and has little interest for the average man. It is not my purpose to review the different arguments put forth to prove that there is a Supreme Being who rules in heaven and earth.

Is there a God? You have undoubtedly heard of the night when Napoleon Bonaparte was standing with a number of his officers around him on the deck of a ship. The moon was shining brightly, and the stars burned in splendor. Some of the officers, saturated with French materialism, were ridiculing the idea of a personal God. The Emperor listened for a time, then, pointing his finger heavenward, he said, "That is all very well, gentlemen, but who made all these?" Here is the universe. Who made it?

Instead of presenting all the arguments for the existence of a God, I simply point to the universe and ask, "Who made this?" Aberdeen was the home of a great philosopher, named Dr. Beattie. He had a little boy who was just able to read. Dr. Beattie wanted to teach that boy about God. How do you suppose he did it? Going out into the garden, with his finger he made in the ground the letters of the boy's name; and when he had made those marks in the earth he put some mustard and cress seed in the lines. About ten days afterward his little boy came running into his study, saying, "Father, father, there is my name coming up in my garden." He could just read it. The father said, "Nonsense! nonsense! There cannot be

your name in the garden. Don't talk like that." He said, "Father, come and see." He took him out, and there was his name in the ground. The philosopher said, "There is nothing in that; it all came by chance." When father and son had walked to the house, the little fellow said, "I do not think it came by chance, father." When the parent asked the child if he thought some one put it there, the little boy replied that he believed some one must have put it there. Then the father began to tell him about the great God Who must have put the stars in the sky and man upon the earth. The average man may well learn the lesson of the little child. Here is the design; but, if there is no God, where is the Designer?

The Author must be greater than the work, since no being can make anything greater than himself. Here is a man, a personal being. There must have been a personal Being to design and make that man. The Bible tells us that there is a personal God, Who created the heavens and the earth, and all things contained therein.

Furthermore, I believe that this Creator is eternal in existence. The first verse of the Scriptures says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." That means that when we first begin to consider time the Lord was. Man must of necessity go back to some starting point. Go as far as he can, he always finds the Eternal, Who is without beginning and without end the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all things.

The greatness of this eternal and personal God is reflected in that which He created. Go out under the sky on a clear night, and study the myriad stars, if you wish to be overwhelmed by the thought of the greatness of the Maker of heaven and earth. As you see the multiplied thousands of heavenly bodies that the telescope reveals, realize that they are only a small part of the great number that have been placed in the different parts of space. Then consider the size and distance of those stars. Start a ball moving 500 miles an hour, about ten times as fast as the fastest express train. It would take that ball about four million years to reach the nearest star, and about five hundred million years to reach the farthest star revealed by the telescope. The universe is simply immeasurable and incomprehensible. This earth is as nothing compared to some of the larger heavenly bodies, if the words of the astronomers are of any value. Who is able to give us an idea of all the mysteries of the earth, to say nothing of the distant stars and planets? Then remember that God has bound all this together in a perfect system of unity and interdependence. Certainly our God is great and greatly to be praised. We stand in amazement when we consider what power and wisdom it must have taken to create the heavens and the earth.

Notice that the Bible does not say that the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but that He created them. The Hebrew word is "bara," which means, not to refashion, but to make out of nothing. Someone objects that out of nothing nothing comes. How do we know

that? All that we can say is that we never saw anything come out of nothing. All that we can do is to transform something into something. At the same time, it is foolish for any man to argue that a thing is impossible simply because he has never seen it accomplished. We live on a ball of matter eight thousand miles in diameter; and no human being has ever been able to create a single grain of sand. Earth, air, and water are teeming with life; but no scientist has ever been able to create a single cell. Yet the Creator has created this great universe out of nothing. With the Psalmist man must say, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised."

#### NEW TESTAMENT WORDS FOR GOD

But it is not enough to know that the Lord created the world and universe, and that He wants us to worship Him in order that we may reach our highest and best development. The man who has never read the Bible may learn that much through reason and intuition. There is but one way to learn all that we ought to know concerning the Eternal Spirit. He has given us the Scriptures to reveal His character and His will for our lives. When all is said and done, it is to that Book that the child of God should go for final authority in all religious matters. Intuition and reason are well in their place, but they are by no means final authority in the Christian life, for they are subject to error.

To study all that the Scriptures say concerning God would take a book rather than a chapter. The Old

Testament uses several words for the Deity, words that deserve much attention; but they are in a special sense duplicated in the New Testament words. While the Old Testament deserves study and is authoritative in the life of every one who professes to be a follower of the Christ, the New Testament is in a peculiar sense the book for the average Christian. I shall therefore limit myself to the study of a few words that Jesus used when speaking of the One Who Created and rules the world and universe.

The first word that calls for consideration is the word "Lord." When using it Christ invariably quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures. This word conveys the ideas there were found in the Hebrew word that the Revisers translate "Jehovah." It suggests what are commonly known as the divine attributes, the first of which is omnipotence. This was touched upon in dealing with God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. All the forces of nature are in His grasp. He holds the entire universe in His power. The elements obey His voice, for He sends the sunshine and the rain. The encircling seas move in obedience to His will. Under His authority are summer and winter, spring and autumn. He holds sway over the lives of men, determining whether life shall continue or whether death shall claim the individual. At His word time shall be no more. He has all power, except to compel a free-moral man to choose to be righteous rather than sinful.

In the second place, the word suggests the wisdom and omniscience of the Creator. All things are open to His eyes. Go where we will, we cannot hide from Him. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings."—Proverbs 5:21. According to the Psalmist: "Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." If we lock ourselves in our secret chamber, and there sin, the Lord reads the inner secret of the heart.

Add to this His omnipresence and spirituality. Jesus said God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must do so in spirit and in truth. Speaking to the woman at the well, He told her that it was not necessary to go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, since He was everywhere present. In the heart of each believer He makes His dwelling place.

Another thought that would come into the mind of the Hebrew when he mentioned Jehovah was the holiness and righteousness of the Lord. God is sinless and so abhors all kinds of wickedness that He will certainly punish the wicked. At the same time, He is so righteous that in no wise will He do anything that is not in strict accordance with absolute justice. Earthly monarchs have their favorites, whom, if guilty, they will often interpose to save, even when the welfare of the kingdom requires their punishment. But God has no favorites. He is no respecter of persons; but will in every instance punish sin. He spared not the angels

when they disobeyed, nor will He permit men to rebel without punishment.

The second word that Jesus used when referring to the Creator was "God." When we inquire concerning the meaning of that word, we are told that it means One to Whom sacrifice is given, or One implored for pardon or guidance. The average man asks no proof that the Lord seeks sacrifice on the part of His servants. Back in the Garden of Eden Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to the Lord, and during all the ages men and women have instinctively made their offerings to the Being they worship. To-day we are not asked to offer up beasts and birds upon an altar to appease the wrath of God, but we are asked to offer our lives as living sacrifices, holy, and acceptable unto the Lord. We are asked to bring an offering to Him that we may forward the interests of His kingdom.

If the idea of sacrifice is instinctive and universal, prayer is common to all worshippers. Wherever men have a religion they lift their voices in petition. The Lord asks that we daily come to Him in prayer, thanking Him for past blessings and making our wants and wishes known. In the life of our Savior prayer held a prominent place. He was constantly speaking with God. The nearer a man approaches the character of the Christ, the more will He be engaged in supplication and communion.

While the Master spoke of the Creator as Lord and as God, the important word that He used was "Father." This is the final name for the Deity. At

another place we read that God is Love. But when Jesus calls God our Father He says more than is said when we are told that He is Love. Many have been the attempts to tell just what that word Father means, but all have failed to express the full beauty and blessedness of what Christ saw when He turned His face heavenward and said, "Father." He realized that mere definition would not suffice; so He gave us that most beautiful story in all literature, the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the aged parent represents God and the wandering and sinful Son is a type of sinful humanity.

Oh what a blessed thought—the omnipotent God, the Maker of heaven and Earth, Who is from everlasting to everlasting, Whose eyes see all things, is my Father and loves me with a love that surpasses that of the fondest earthly parent for his children! Have I fallen into wickedness and sin? He still loves me, and pleads with me to return home. Do I have heavy burdens to bear? He understands and sympathizes with me in my distress. Since He is my Father, all things will work together for my eternal good.

#### SUMMARY

What shall the average Christian believe about God? First of all, he ought to realize that he needs clear views concerning the First Person of the Trinity, since his views of what God is will determine what his religious life will be. He needs to realize that the Lord

Who created heaven and earth and all things therein seeks his devotion and obedience. Then he should constantly think of God as a personal Spirit, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and infinitely holy and just. This Infinite Being wants man to offer his life and means as a sacrifice on the altar of service; and asks that daily the voice be lifted in prayer. But the greatest thought any man can have of the Lord is that He is his Father, and that He loves with a greater love than humanity can describe. Man may know the Lord through the Bible; but no one can fully know what God is until he surrenders his heart to the Lord and permits Him to possess and control the life and actions. Then will he realize that man was made for communion with God, and that he is not himself until he enjoys the constant fellowship of the heavenly Parent.

JESUS CHRIST

"What think ye of Christ?"—Matt. 22:42.

"Never man spake like this man."—John 7:46.

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin."—Heb. 4:15.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."—John 1:1, 3.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."—Heb. 13:8.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matt. 18:20.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."—Matt. 28:18.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."—I Corinthians 15:3.

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—Titus 2:14.

"Knowing that He Which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us also by Jesus, and shall present us with Him."—I Cor. 4:14.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."—Heb. 9:24.

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."—Acts 1:10-11.

## JESUS CHRIST

**W**HAT think ye of Christ? This question fell from the lips of Jesus, Who realized that practically everything in the Christian life depends upon our answer to it. Mohammedans, Confucianists, Buddhists, and other religionists need have but a faint idea of what they believe about the founders of their religions; but in Christianity all depends upon what we believe about the Founder of our faith. If He stands, our faith is secure; if He falls, the Bible and every important doctrine of the church perishes. It was upon the right answer to the above question that Christ built His church, declaring that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. A Christian is one who is definitely related to Jesus Christ. This makes it important that each one should be able to state clearly what he believes about the Christ.

### THE GREATEST TEACHER OF ALL THE AGES

We may safely begin by saying that we believe He is the greatest teacher the world has ever known. In the realm of instruction He spake as never man spake. Yonder in Palestine He saw a sower, a fox, a bird, and a lily. Grouping the truth around them, He so taught that we are scarcely able to see a sower, a fox, a bird, or a lily without thinking of Jesus and the

truths He proclaimed. Taking the little sparrow as it chirped in the trees and shrubbery, He portrayed the love and care of the infinite God, so that we know the very hairs of our head are precious in the sight of the eternal God. Finding that the world had an incomplete idea of the love of the Lord, He drew the picture of an erring boy returning to the bosom of a loving parent, so that every sinner may see in the story of the Prodigal Son that hope which makes the desert blossom as the rose, which makes a heaven of hope out of a hell of gloom and despair. For the first time men saw that the Creator is a gracious and loving Presence standing with outstretched arms, pleading with sinful men to forsake their sin and seek forgiveness. Not for a moment did He teach that God does not hate all sin and that He will not punish the impenitent sinner; but He did declare that the Lord would rather see men forsake their transgression than punish them for it.

In an age of slavery and special privilege He taught a social message. He attacked poverty, war, drunkenness, and cruelty in government when those things were tolerated and defended by practically all men. He revealed sin in all its hideousness, but He did not stop there. He did what all true teachers of this and every other age ought to do—He showed how to conquer the sin. Would you stand amazed in the presence of His matchless wisdom and preaching? Read the Sermon on the Mount, and compare it with the best literature of the world. It is as a priceless pearl by the side of a heap of rough pebbles. Reading His match-

less teaching one is reminded of the stars in the clear sky, so numerous that they cannot be counted and so brilliant that they dazzle the eyes.

Uniting precept and example, He taught men how to live so as to make this world a heaven and to prepare for the real heaven in the land beyond the skies. He alone taught us all that we need to know about God, sin, forgiveness, and the future. Following His advice man will reach greater heights than by following all other teachers of all ages.

#### THE GREATEST MAN OF ALL TIME

Practically all great theologians from the earliest times to the present have believed in the true humanity of Jesus. He was limited in His sphere of activity by the human body. He was encompassed about by all the sinless infirmities that belong to our nature. He had the needs that are common to all; need of food, need of rest, need of human sympathy, and need of divine aid. He was subject to His parents; He was a worshipper in the Synagogue and the Temple. He wept over a sinful city and at the tomb of a friend. He grew from babyhood to boyhood, and then to manhood. He was tempted as we are, and developed character in the same manner that we develop it.

He was an ideal Hebrew and yet the most cosmopolitan of men. The very greatest of men have been unable to free themselves from the influences amid which they were born and educated. Peculiarities of

race and the spirit of the age in which they lived left in their characters traits that seemed imperishable. To the very end Luther was a German; Calvin a Frenchman; and John Knox a Scotchman. Augustine always acted according to the Roman type; and Chrysostom according to the Greek type. Paul, that giant of the early church, was always a Hebrew at heart. Jesus was the only man who is entitled to be called the Great Cosmopolitan, the citizen of no country and no age, but of all countries and all ages. He was the ideal radical, and yet the ideal conservative. Forever has the world lost the form of His face. Artists have made their guesses as to what He resembled, but always in vain. No type of man, no model of face, can claim that Christ is its own. He is for all men and all ages.

In Him is found the highest type of unselfishness, which is one of the best proofs of real greatness. Many were His opportunities to gratify ambition; but He pleased not Himself and sought not His own glory. Hungry He fed not Himself; but worked a miracle to feed the multitudes in the lonely desert. At the Samaritan well He requested a cup of cold water, not for self, but that He might save a soul. Lord of the universe, He was willing to be in poverty that gave Him no place to rest His head.

The great men of all faiths and all ages express admiration for the character and words of Jesus. The Jews confess that He was a remarkable man; the Mohammedan world gives to Him the high title of

Messiah; and the leaders of the civilized nations unite in placing Him at the head of the world's leaders. Shakespeare, Carlyle, Emerson, Napoleon Bonaparte, John Stuart Mills, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and thousands of others who were not leaders in church life agree that Jesus is far above all other men.

With Pilate His critics are compelled to say that they find no fault in Him. He was tempted as we are, yet without sin. Living with Him for several years, the disciples could find no fault. Judas realized that he had betrayed innocent blood when he gave Christ into the hands of the Jews. John the Baptist, one of the purest and best men the world ever entertained shrank from baptizing this Holy One. Christ never asked pardon for sin, for He had none to confess.

Behold the Son of Man, the fairest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely, the true man, the man after God's own heart. Placed by His side the great men of the world are mere pigmies. "What Mount Blanc as the king of the Alps is, lifting its crystal domes and towers 15,781 feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea, compared with the snow-clad and cloud-kissed mountains of the Alps, that Jesus Christ is compared with the loftiest men who have risen as mountain heights above their fellows through the ages. What the Himalaya range, the most elevated and stupendous mountain range on the globe, sweeping across historic lands as far as from New York to Chicago and back to New York, and rising so high that the

superb Matterhorn, if lifted bodily and placed upon the Jungfrau, would not reach the glittering Himalaya heights, that and more Jesus Christ is to the long line of men who have risen highest in mortal grandeur in the history of the human race."

He was the Great Example after which we may well fashion our lives. In Him, and in Him only, the plant of humanity blossomed and bloomed into a perfect flower. He taught men how to live.

#### ONE WITH THE FATHER

How are we to account for this sinlessness and perfection? Can we explain it on the basis of manhood alone? He claimed to be one with the Father, more than man, very God in human form. If He claimed to be very God, and was not, He is an imposter, and at the same time loses all claim to leadership among men. On one occasion He said, "I and the Father are one." The Jews hearing that statement took up stones to kill Him, because they understood Him to make Himself God. At another time Philip said: "Shew us the Father, and it suffieth us." Jesus turned to him, and said: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Christ was either an imposter, or He was more than a human being.

Not only does He make Himself equal with the Father, but all the writers of the New Testament make Him equal with God. In the first verses of the

Gospel by John, John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Compare that with the first verse in the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth Christ was with Him, and He was God at that time. Without Him was not anything created that was created. Paul and the other inspired writers make similar claims for the Master. Many passages might be quoted to prove this, but they are so numerous that it would be impossible to notice them all, and then they would not be what is most needed in this connection. Dr. Dale compares those passages that prove the deity of Christ to salt-crystals which appear on the sand of the sea-beach after the tide has receded. "They are," he says, "Not the strongest, though they may be the most apparent, proofs that the sea is salt; the salt is present in solution in every bucket of the sea water." The deity of Christ is present in solution in all the writings of the New Testament.

He is credited with the divine attributes of eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability. The Author of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Christ accepted worship that was due to God alone. When Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God," Jesus did not

utter a word of protest. He forgave sins as only the Lord has the power to forgive.

The average Christian can do no better than believe that Christ is God in human form, God spelled out in terms of man. The Apostles' Creed tells us that He was born of the Virgin Mary. He had no earthly father, although Joseph was His step-father, or the father who adopted Him. I know that here and there a higher critic tries to show his wisdom by saying that he cannot accept the virgin birth, since it is contrary to nature. That sort of statement was given attention in the distant past, but in this progressive age it is the next thing to a sign of ignorance. In the *Encyclopedia Britannica* no less an authority than Thomas Huxley, in his last article on "Biology," says: "Throughout almost all series of living beings, agamo genesis, or non-sexual generation prevailed." Do you know that every drone in a hive of bees is virginally produced from the unfructified egg laid by a virgin queen? If I find these exceptions existing in the lower orders of nature, is it unreasonable for me to believe that God could and did abrogate the laws as we ordinarily know them for the purpose of redeeming the world? The truth is that it does not tax my credulity to accept the statement that the second Person of the Trinity took upon Himself a human form, and ushered into the world through the agency of the Holy Spirit, entered upon the task of perfectly revealing the Father to sinful men.

## CRUCIFIED FOR OUR SINS

This sinless Son of God died for our sins. That was the primary purpose of the incarnation. Here we meet the question: "But why was it necessary for Him to suffer and die that we might have peace with God? If I have sinned against the Lord, and repent of my transgressions, what else is there for the Lord to do but forgive my sins?" That is a straightforward question and seems to have more than ordinary force, since we know the loving heavenly Father portrayed in the parable of the Prodigal Son. For a holy and just God to forgive sin is no light matter. Plato, who never knew the holiness and righteousness of the Lord as we know it, once said: "I think that God can forgive sin, but I do not see how." In the sight of good men sin is a terrible thing and calls for punishment. Can it be less hideous in the sight of the Lord?

There are but four attitudes that God can take toward sin—ignorance, indifference, consent, condemnation. An all-wise Creator cannot be ignorant of any transgressions. A holy God cannot be indifferent. A just God cannot give His consent. There is but one thing to do; and that is to condemn. How then shall the Lord express His condemnation? There are but two ways—through percept and through penalty. The Almighty tried percept in the Garden of Eden: "Eat not of it, for in the day when thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Disobedience demands the only remaining manner of treatment—penalty. Eternal

love has no other course to follow. "There is nothing of revenge, nothing of hatred, nothing of sanguinary desire in God's punishment of sin." For Him to forgive without punishment or sacrifice would be to put approval instead of condemnation on sin. This would destroy the justice and holiness of the immutable God.

The problem then becomes that of forgiving without destroying the law. Every free pardon is a confession that the law is defective, or that the administration of the law is untrustworthy, or that the condemned person is not so guilty as he was supposed to be. Were pardons to be multiplied until every offender should become an object of clemency, law would become a farce, and every person would in the final analysis be without law. God would really be approving sin and sinners. So we see that sin must be punished; and the law must be given its free course. God is Love and wants to forgive, but finds the law in the way of mercy. What is to be done?

During the French Revolution a noble young man was imprisoned, and on the day of trial he, with many others, was sentenced to death. By some means when he was called to go to the place of execution his father responded to his name and went to death for him. The law was satisfied. When the guillotine blade flashed in the sun that day the father died, but the son lived. The father died for the son. This is an imperfect picture or illustration of how Christ met the demands of an outraged law and died for us; but it suggests the fact that for us He paid the debt.

That is the great truth of the New Testament. Remove it, and you destroy the power and beauty of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. The preaching of the cross is the power of God. What the church needs more and more is greater emphasis on the atonement through the shed blood of the Christ. By no means less of ethics and law, but more of the cross is needed, since it is primary.

We are saved through the death of Christ, and through that death alone. There is no other name given by which men and women may be saved from sin and guilt. Morality cannot save, because it cannot cancel the past. Christ can save no matter how deep the stain of sin. Sinner, there is but one emancipation proclamation for you; it is the one given when on the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished."

#### HE AROSE FROM THE TOMB TO GUARANTEE OUR RESURRECTION

It is encouraging to know that He died to redeem us from sin, but it is even more encouraging to know that He both died and arose from the tomb. He not only snatched the sceptre from the hands of Satan, but He also conquered death and led it into captivity. The resurrection is mentioned one hundred and four or more times in the New Testament. It held a prominent place in the testimony of the early Christians. It was given special emphasis by Peter in his Pentecostal sermon. If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is

our faith vain and we are of all men most miserable. The crucifixion loses its meaning apart from the resurrection. Without the resurrection the death of Christ is scarcely more than the heroic death of an unselfish martyr; but with the bursting of the tomb it is deliverance from eternal bondage. And we know that He arose; for there is no better established fact in the history of that age. Therefore some glad day we shall rise and dwell with Him through all eternity.

ON RIGHT HAND OF FATHER AND IN THE HEARTS OF  
BELIEVERS

Forty days after the resurrection He ascended into heaven where He is seated on the right hand of the Father, making intercession for the saints. He is pleading in our behalf, seeking our forgiveness, and victory for us in our battles with sin and Satan.

At the same time He exercises His omnipresence and is in the world. Martin Luther used to say that if anyone should knock at his breast and ask who lives there, he would reply, "Not Martin Luther, but the Lord Jesus." When the Master gave the Great Commission He said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." I believe Christ is present in the life of every faithful child of God.

## HE WILL COME AGAIN

The hope of the world is in His second coming, when He shall gather His loved ones to Himself. When He ascended into heaven the angel told the watching disciples that He would come again in like manner as they saw Him depart. There is coming a day, no one knows just how soon, when the Son of God will return to earth to gather the faithful to Himself. That coming will mark a great judgment in which His enemies will be defeated once for all and His friends crowned eternally.

## SUMMARY

What shall the average Christian believe about Jesus? He is the greatest teacher the world has ever known. He was a real man, the greatest man of all the ages. He was born of the Virgin Mary, and was God living in terms of men. He died for our sins; and only through Him can we enjoy freedom from the guilt and power of unrighteousness. He arose from the tomb and brought assurance of eternal life to all who are willing to accept Him as their Savior. He is seated on the right hand of God, making intercession for the saints; and also dwelling in the life of every faithful child of God. He will come again in judgment to punish the rebellious and to reward the righteous.

No one can tell all that Christ may mean to the true Christian. Each day adds new experiences and reveals

new beauty in the Lord. A prince once sent to his fiancée a box containing what he said was a present of rare value. On opening it, she found nothing but a rough-looking egg. Her first impulse was to throw it away, but for the sake of the giver she held it in her hand for a moment, when her finger touched a secret spring and the egg flew open, revealing an egg of brass. Touching another spring revealed an egg of silver; and still another threw the silver open and revealed an egg of gold. With this she was well satisfied, but there was a spring in that also, which when touched revealed a cluster of costly diamonds. Similar is the experience of the one who daily tries to learn more and more of Christ. Each day brings richer and more joyous experiences.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."—John 16:7-14. (R. V.)

"If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—Luke 11:13.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John 3:5.

"Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."—Matthew 12:31. (R. V.)

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."—Matthew 28:19. (R. V.)

"And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."—Acts 1:4-5.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."—Acts 2:4.

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"—I Cor. 6:19.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

### DEFINITION

**A** STUDY of the Holy Spirit naturally brings us into the midst of mystery. The first recorded reference to the Spirit that our Lord made definitely declared the mysteriousness of the theme. Deeply impressed by the miracles of Christ, and yet fearing the harsh criticism of his colleagues, a Pharisee, named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, in the quiet of an eastern night sought Jesus and questioned Him concerning the kingdom of God. Christ saw into his heart, and replied: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Each man must be born of the Spirit to become a member of the heavenly community. Accustomed to take things literally, Nicodemus could not comprehend these words, and asked how that could be possible. To him in his confusion Jesus said: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." When you are able to understand all the mysteries of the wind, you may be excused for complaining about the secrets of the Spirit. Who can explain all about God the Father? Who understands all the enigmas of the Son of God in human form?

Yet we study those lofty themes with profit. Although the Holy Spirit cannot be fully explained, a study is necessary to deepen the religious life, and to give the average man a reason for his faith.

The unfathomableness of the Spirit has led many to suppose that He is a mere influence. Often men and women speak of the Holy Spirit as "it." Everywhere in the Bible the masculine gender is used, and He is never spoken of as a mere influence separate from personality. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He shall show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." If John had tried to show that the Spirit was a person in the masculine gender, he could hardly have done it more effectively than in these verses. A careful examination of all the references in the New Testament will show that all the distinctive characteristics of personality are ascribed to Him. He is a personal spirit, just as God is a personal and ever-present spirit.

He was in the beginning, and took part in the creation. In the first chapter of Genesis we read that God created the heavens and the earth, and that the earth was without form and void, and that darkness was upon the face of the deep. Then the Word adds that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. The Hebrew word for God in this relation is "Elohim," and is a plural noun. We read at another

place that "the Lord our God is one God." To translate that as it is in the original would be to make it read, "The Lord our Gods is one God." I believe that the one God who is mentioned in the plural is the God of majesty, but that He is also God as represented in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From the very beginning the church has held that the Paraclete is very God. Where is the evangelical church that does not sing the Gloria Patri? Every time you sing it you worship the Spirit? "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." The same is true in the use of the Doxology: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow: Praise Him all creatures here below: Praise Him above, ye heav'nly hosts: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." We praise Him as God because all the attributes of the Father and Son are ascribed to Him in the Scriptures.

He is to us what Jesus would be were He here and able to be present in the heart of every believer. Before Christ left the world He told the disciples that it was expedient that He go, since the Comforter would take His place and do better work. Christ in bodily form could not see all men and help all; but the Spirit takes the Savior's place and meets every heart. "Suppose Jesus were still in the Holy Land, at Jerusalem. Every ship that started for the East would be crowded with Christian pilgrims. Every train flying through Europe would be thronged with people going to see Jesus. Every mail-bag would be full of letters from those in difficulty and trial, and gifts of homage to manifest

men's gratitude and love. You yourself, let us say, are in one of those ships. The port, when you arrive after a long voyage, is blocked with vessels of every flag. With much difficulty you land, and join one of the long trains starting for Jerusalem. Far as eye can reach the caravans move over the deserts in an endless stream. You do not mind the scorching sun, the choking dust, the elbowing crowds, the burning sands. You are in the Holy Land, and you will see Jesus! Yonder, at last, in the far distance, are the glittering spires of the Holy Hill, above all the burnished Temple dome beneath which He sits. But what is that dark seething mass stretching for leagues and leagues between you and the Holy City? They have come from the north and south, from the east and the west, as you have, to look upon their Lord. They wish

'That His Hands might be placed on their head;  
That His arms might be thrown around them.'

but it cannot be. You have come to see Jesus, but you will not see Him. They have been there for weeks, months, years, and have not seen Him. They are a yard or two nearer, and that is all. The thing is impossible. It is an anti-climax, an absurdity. It would be a social outrage; it would be a physical impossibility."—Henry Drummond.

Jesus saw all that, and ascended into heaven, and sent the Third Person of the Trinity to take up the work where He left it. I believe, then, that the Holy

Spirit is a mysterious Person; that He is equal with the Father and the Son; that He takes up the work that Christ left, and is carrying it on more perfectly because He is not limited by a human body.

#### HIS WORK FOR CHRIST

The next thing to be considered is how He carries on that work. This may be divided under several heads, the first of which is His work in connection with the Savior. We know so little about the Comforter because His primary task is not to reveal Himself, but the Christ. Large numbers of people make the mistake of supposing that they ought to have a continual revelation of the Spirit in their lives. They feel that He only works when the world witnesses a special demonstration. Jesus said that the Spirit shall not speak of Himself. His office is to glorify Christ. The incarnation of the Son of God was His work; and He alone can explain the person and work of the Savior.

The disciples did not fully understand Christ until the Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. We cannot see the beauties of a great painting by standing close to the canvas. The tourist enjoys the sights of his tour as memory reveals them after he has returned home more than he enjoyed them at the time of his travels. Likewise after the death of our Lord the Spirit recalled the things He did and what He said so as to enable them to see and know Him. Before that time they knew Christ in His body; after that they knew Him in His spiritual aspect, and in His life-giving power.

The same thing might truthfully be said concerning His teachings. When the Comforter came all things were brought back to their remembrance. Old truths and perplexing sayings teemed with new meaning. Words that they had mused on in doubt were interpreted so as to be filled with comfort and cheer. Sayings that had seemed clear were seen to have even profounder meaning. All the Old Testament found a new and deeper meaning in Christ.

#### HIS RELATION TO THE SCRIPTURES

When the Bible is studied, it is discovered that the Spirit inspired the writers to pen the different books. He moved upon their minds so that they were able to write things too deep for human wisdom. They wrote, thinking they knew what they were penning; but their writing had a meaning of which they never dreamed. All Scripture is given by inspiration. He who gave it is alone able to clearly forcibly interpret it. On this account devout men and women with little education can often interpret a passage of Scripture so as to put to shame the brilliant scholar who has no real religious experience. The only way to find the truest riches of the Word is to open it with the prayer: "Holy Spirit, open my understanding that I may behold wondrous things in the Bible." Studying it in human wisdom, we may find many helpful truths, but only He who inspired men to write it can interpret it so as to enable the reader to see Jesus in all His power and glory.

## HIS WORK IN AND FOR SINNERS

After glorifying Christ, the great task for the Comforter is to lead lost men and women back to God. Christ came into the world to lead sinners to repentance. The Third Person of the Trinity takes His place, and of necessity assumes that task. In the words of the Master: "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." He will convince the world of sin. The world has thousands of people who are perfectly indifferent to Christ, because they have no sense of sin, and therefore feel no need of a Savior. The world of itself has little knowledge of sin, although sin is at the root of all its troubles and difficulties. One of the outstanding characteristics of the whole Gospel message is the terribleness that it attaches to all sin. In the sight of God all disobedience is intensely wicked. Religion is almost unknown so long as men are not made to know that in the sight of God they are sinful creatures, and therefore liable to the curses of a broken law. The Spirit convicts the world of sin because men believe not in Christ.

The great sin of the ages, the sin of all sins, is unbelief. Not a single transgression in the catalogue of guilt can be compared with it. A man may be guilty of murder, and find forgiveness; but a man cannot continue in unbelief and enter heaven. When Peter preached his great sermon he condemned the Jews for their rejection of Christ, not for worldliness, nor for their covetousness.

It is useless for us as Christians to undertake in our own strength the task of convicting the world of sin. We are told that Confucius once exclaimed: "It is all over! I have not yet seen one who would perceive his fault and inwardly accuse himself." Society condemns murder; it finds fault with lying and theft; but it fails to realize that in the sight of God we are all guilty: Here is the problem—to make the respectable man realize that in the sight of God he is a guilty sinner, and that he must repent to be saved.

Having convinced the world of sin, the next step is to convict them of righteousness. The sense of guilt is but an acknowledgment that we ought to be righteous. The sting of guilt is found in the fact that we are capable of better things. Jesus says that the reason for this conviction is found in his going to the Father. We ought to be righteous, because the Spirit is present to help us win the victory over sin and Satan.

The third conviction that the Comforter works in the hearts of sinners is that of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged. Men are to be shown that there is an eternal difference between right and wrong, and in no instance will wrong be mistaken for right. The spirit is constantly showing that through the death of Christ the rule of Satan is closed, and a day is coming when before the great assize each must give an account of every act of his life.

Here we meet with the sin against the Holy Ghost. More than one noble soul has been worried lest he has at some time or other committed the unpardonable

sin. Jesus taught that all sin was subject to forgiveness except the sin against the Holy Spirit. I believe that the sin against the Spirit is considering Him as working for and under the power of Satan. There are those who claim that it is final rejection of Christ. I am unable to see why Jesus did not say that it was final rejection of Himself, if that is all He meant. At the same time, he who believes that the work of the Spirit is the work of Satan is not likely to permit that Spirit to lead him to salvation. The Jews to whom the Lord said that all sin has forgiveness except the sin against the Holy Ghost were practically declaring that Jesus was working through the power of the Devil when He was working through the power of the Spirit will no longer convict you of sin; and you will worried about having committed the unpardonable sin, you have not committed it. If you are guilty of it, the Spirit. Of one thing you may feel certain—if you are not worry about it, because a man does not convict himself of guilt.

To sum up concerning the work of the Third Person of the Trinity in relation to the unsaved, I believe He convicts them of sin, and points them to righteousness; that He convinces them of judgment that follows sin; and that He no longer convicts the man who has sinned against Him.

#### HIS RELATION TO CHRISTIANS

When an unsaved man determines to forsake sin and accept Christ as his Savior, it is the Spirit who changes

him from a child of Satan to a child of God. No man can be a Christian and an heir to eternal life, unless he is born anew through the power of the Comforter. "Ye must be born again."

Having been born from above, there are many relations that the new person bears to the Paraclete. To the disciples who were sorrowful because they were about to lose the presence of the Master, to follow Whom they had forsaken all, and in Whom they had put all their trust, Jesus said He would send the Comforter. The Comforter would cheer the hearts of those early disciples and give them courage to meet persecution and trials that were in store for them. To every discouraged and sorrowing child of God the Spirit comes with the balm of consolation and hope.

He is more than a comforter. The word Comforter comes from the Greek word "Parakletos." "It was the custom in the ancient tribunals for the parties to appear in court attended by one or more of their influential friends, who were called in Greek paracletes, in Latin advocati. These paracletes or advocates gave their friends—not for fee or reward, but from love and interest—the advantage of their personal presence and the aid of their judicial counsel. They advised them what to do, what to say, spoke for them, acted on their behalf, made the cause of their friends their cause, stood by them and for them in their trials, difficulties, and dangers of the situation." Jesus sends the Paraclete to help us in all our trials and difficulties.

This is of importance; but of equal importance are

the words: "He will guide you into all truth." Before the crucifixion Christ told the disciples that He had many things to tell them, but that they were unable to receive them at that time. When they became able to receive, the Spirit would reveal. The promise was not that they should know everything; but that all we need to know about the Christian life will be revealed as we are able to bear it.

After revealing to us what we ought to do, the Spirit enables us to do it. In his own strength man is unable to gain the victory over his lower nature. The Paraclete furnished the needed power. The only way to conquer the world, the flesh, and the Devil is through the help of the Holy Spirit.

He who wins the victory over the enemies of his soul is under obligation to help others out of sin into the glorious light and liberty of Christ. In other words, he is supposed to enter a life of service. The reason so many fail in religious work is because they fail to rely upon the Comforter for guidance. He who would be a soul-winner must seek the aid of the Spirit.

It is not enough to seek the occasional aid of the Paraclete. Seek to have Him dwell in you constantly. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul said, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Oh what an honor is ours! The indwelling spirit of Paul would make a second Paul. The indwelling Spirit wants to transform us into the likeness of the Christ. We ought to live the very best

lives lest we drive Him out of our hearts; for He will not remain in the life where sin rules. Let us not make the mistake of supposing that the Comforter is not dwelling in us if we fail to feel like constantly singing a hallelujah chorus. So long as you are true to the Lord and endeavor to live a consistent Christian life, just that long can you depend upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

In this connection men often make the error of thinking that since the Comforter dwells in us we ought not pray for a special filling of power. There is a difference between being filled with the Holy Ghost and being full of Him. In the Acts of the Apostles we find at least three different times when Peter was filled with the Spirit. In 2:4 when the disciples received the Holy Spirit he received Him also. In 4:8 before the Jewish rulers he was filled again. Then in 4:31 we read; "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The word full is used to designate the habitual fullness or presence of the Spirit. The word fill is used to designate special outpourings. It is perfectly proper for a Christian to pray for the Spirit to come and fill with special power for service. More than that, every child of God ought to pray for new baptisms of power.

#### HIS RELATION TO THE CHURCH

If the individual needs these special baptisms of power, the church needs them even more. Before Jesus ascended into heaven He told His followers not to

endeavor to go forth as preachers and teachers of the Gospel, until they were filled with power from on high. It seemed like a waste of ten days for them to remain in that upper room praying, and worshipping, while all about them men and women were perishing in sin. Yet Jesus commanded them to tarry until they received the power of the Spirit. When the Spirit of Pentecost fell upon them, they went forth, and in one day won more souls than they could have won in ten years without the special anointing. Christ wants His church to be under the leadership and power of the Comforter. If He did not permit such men as Peter, James, John, and Andrew, men who had been with Him in three years of special training, to work for souls before they had received a special baptism of power, what right have such weak mortals as most of us are to try to do the work of the church in our own strength? The only church that will accomplish the task God has for it is the church that is true to the Paraclete. In its prayers, in its hymns, and in its teaching and preaching the church ought to give a prominent place to the Promised Power.

#### HOW RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

This chapter would be incomplete without an answer to the question: "How can we receive the presence and power of the Holy Spirit?" On the Day of Pentecost when Peter was addressing the multitude, he said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." No life can expect to have the presence and power of the Spirit of God so long as that life permits sin to have a prominent place. Sin and the Comforter cannot dwell together in harmony. In Acts 5:32 Peter tells the council that the apostles are witnesses of the work and resurrection of Christ, and adds, "so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Obedience is the first essential.

Then comes persistent prayer for power. Add to this daily prayer a firm faith that God is as good as His promises. Then you can rest assured that faith will bring the blessing. To put it in a nutshell, prayer and faith will bring the Comforter to any life that is absolutely surrendered to God to do whatsoever He wants the individual to do, to say just what he wants him to say, and to go where He wants him to go.

**SATAN**

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written: He shall give his angels charge concerning Thee."—Matthew 4:5-6.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."—John 8:44.

"Now there came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.—Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought"—Job 2:6, 9.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."—Luke 22:31.

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world."—Matthew 13:37-39.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."—I Peter 5:8.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."—I John 3:8.

"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."—I Thessalonians 2:18.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."—James 4:7.

"Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison."—Revelation 2:10.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20:1-3.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."—Revelation 20:10.

## SATAN

### THERE IS A PERSONAL SATAN

**T**HIS is an age when few sermons are preached about Satan. He seems to have been forgotten. Christians have few, if any, clearly defined views of his character. Sinners fail to realize that he is holding a prominent place in their lives. Whenever he is mentioned in a public meeting, there are those who smile or seem amused. He is often considered a joke; but he is no joke—he is a terrible reality, and should be studied by every one who is a candidate for heaven and eternal life. By no means neglect him in your consideration when you are forming your confession of faith; for he will hold a prominent place in your striving to gain the mansions of glory.

Certainly, I agree with those who claim that the very thought of Satan causes a feeling of dread, almost akin to horror. It is so much pleasanter to think about God, righteousness, and heaven! All that is true; but I am here to contend that God, righteousness, and heaven are not all that we meet in forming our characters. I hate the very thought of sin. Murder, theft, lying, adultery, and other sins make me shudder. Botherly love, honesty, purity, and goodness appeal to me; but I am compelled to realize that all is not righteousness. Sin is everywhere; and he who tries

to ignore it, and fails to realize that it is a reality, will sooner or later become its slave.

Heaven is only won at the cost of considering hell, and striving to escape it. Righteousness is the opposite of sin, and is only attained by realizing that sin is everywhere to be fought against. Likewise, a loving and holy God suggests a hateful and sinful being to be fought against. In almost all, if not all the religions of the world, there is a belief in a dark world ruled by an evil spirit or evil spirits, who strive to undo what the good spirit or good spirits try to do. There is no denying that there is a mighty conflict between good and evil. Every upward step is opposed by a force that pulls downward. The very thought of good compels us to think of that which is not good. The very construction of our language is such that the one has no full meaning apart from the other. What is good? Can you give an answer without thinking of the opposite of good?

What causes this evil? Does the Lord strive to win us from sin to goodness and at the same time work against His own efforts? Does the Lord save a soul, and then try to persuade that soul to sin? To ask the question is to answer it in the negative. Who then is back of this continual effort to overthrow the work of the Creator? The Bible says it is Satan, the enemy of the Lord and His people. No man can profess to believe the Scriptures and at the same time argue against the existence of a devil.

How about the man who does not accept the Bible

as final authority in this matter? Of course, he is fully convinced that there is no devil! He takes that for granted, because there is no devilishness in the world. Everybody is so good, everybody is so honest, everybody has such high morals, such beautiful practices that we can charge it all to the Lord. Is there a Satan? The best way to prove that there is not is to get rid of all the devilishness that curses the world. I believe that there is a devil because all about me I see his work in the lives of men and women.

Having accepted the existence of Satan, the next question that concerns us deals with the nature of the leader of the kingdom of wickedness. To many he seems a sort of pernicious influence, pervading all minds in business, society, and even in the church. To others, such as Christian Scientists, he is only the evil that is within the mind of the individual. According to this theory when a man through culture or self-restraint gets rid of the evil tendencies in his own life he is rid of all satanic influences. So long as we fail to study our Bibles such ideas may attract our attention; but they have no weight with the man who becomes an intelligent student of the Scriptures.

If there is no personal devil, the account of Christ's temptation in the wilderness is a myth and a farce. That story demands a personal devil, if it is to stand the test of truth. To say that Jesus was tempted by the evil in His own heart is, to say the least, a sacrilegious denial of His deity and perfect humanity. If He was the holy and sinless Son of God, we must

believe that there was no sin in Him to tempt Him as He was tempted.

The entire teaching of the Bible on this theme is so positive that we must either reject it or agree that the devil is a person. He is given 22 distinct titles, describing his character, position, occupation, and sphere of action. If he is not a person, then the language of the Bible has no meaning. If the biblical description of him, and references to him do not prove his personality, then they do not prove that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are persons.

Notice the story of the aged patriarch Job, who was a rich and very prosperous farmer, until one day the sons of God came together in council, and Satan came with them. God mentioned Job as an example of devotion and consecration, when Satan remarked that Job served the Lord for what he got out of it; and that if his property were destroyed his devotion would be less pronounced. When the possessions were destroyed, and the aged hero remained faithful to the Lord, Satan argued that if his body were tortured, Job would curse God instead of worshipping Him. What stretch of the imagination could say that the evil within his own heart was thus telling the Lord that Job was serving God for earthly prosperity, especially since it was false?

The references in the New Testament are so numerous that it is impossible to discuss them all in a small space like this. It is sufficient to say that Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, John, and other writers had a clear belief that Satan is a personal being at the head of the

forces of evil. In Revelation 12:9 we read: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

His origin is shrouded in mystery. No one knows just when or why God created him. The working of the Lord is broader than the measure of man's mind. Many theories have been advanced to show when and why the Lord brought this being into existence; but the Lord has seen fit to hide from us the mystery surrounding the origin of Satan. Milton speculates, but does not prove his theory. What concerns us most is not why he is here and how he got here; but that he is here and working against the children of the Lord. It will pay us better to shun him than to worry because we are unable to explain his origin.

#### SOME BIBLE NAMES FOR SATAN

What we need to study is his character and methods of work so that we may be able to guard against him. I know of no better way of doing this than by studying some of the names that the Bible gives to him. The first one is the word "Satan," which signifies a separator and slanderer, or a malignant accuser. Without a doubt Satan is the great separator, separating God and man, and man and man by means of hatred, envy, and jealousy. At the beginning he accused God of selfishness and deceit by persuading Eve that the Lord forbade her to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil because by eating of it she would be made wise as a god and be able to discern between right and wrong. With malicious subtlety he slandered the Lord and led our first parents away from innocence and fellowship with God.

In the book of Job we have an account of how he accused a man before the Lord. In Genesis he slandered God before humanity; in Job he slandered man before the Lord. He called the righteousness of Job selfishness. In Revelation 12:10 we read that he accused the brethren day and night. Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to act as our Advocate to defend us against this accuser and slanderer.

The word most commonly used to describe this personality is "Devil." This suggests the author of falsehood. Jesus called him a liar. He began his deceit in the Edenic scene and has continued it ever since. No wonder that we are told that he was a liar from the beginning. That is why he is able to lead so many people into sin and eternal death. Beginning by persuading them that he is not a reality, and then acting as an angel of light, he promises all that heart can wish if men will but accept his plans for their lives; if he were to come in his own dress, and announce his coming, few, if any, would permit him to lead them astray; but he comes as a wolf in lamb's clothing and as an angel from heaven. To Jesus he promised all the kingdoms of this world if He would but bow down and worship. He offers the youth worlds of pleasure and long years of enjoyment, if that youth will but

postpone his salvation. Instead he rewards the youth with remorse and hardens his heart so that old age and death creep on before the youth is aware. Finally he leads the deceived one into eternal night, still whispering that there is plenty of time to become a Christian.

This calls to our minds another of the names, "That Old Serpent." Warning the disciples against failure, Jesus told them to be wise as serpents. Satan is a past master in his work. He is experienced in leading men to perdition. The first reference to him says that he is more subtle than any beast of the field. As a serpent in the grass bites the innocent child before it is aware of the serpent's presence, so the Old Serpent poisons our minds and lives before we realize he is near. We ought to fear and hate him as an Irishman hates a snake.

Peter speaks of him as "your adversary the devil." He is a tireless foe, cunning, and always on the alert. None of us ever takes a step in the right direction that he does not try to ensnare us in his nets. No man ever put on the armour of God, that he did not try to persuade him not to use it. Where is the man who has found it easy to serve God day after day, week after week, and month after month? Just when you imagine everything is going along nicely, just then something is certain to happen that tries your soul and discourages you. Rest assured that so long as you are serving the Lord Satan will not give up his efforts to win you back into sin. He is the enemy of your soul. You may not

realize that he is present, but in the church, in the home, on the street, wherever you go, he is as the adversary of all that is good, trying to persuade you to give up your efforts to please the Master.

#### WHY GOD TOLERATES HIM

An Indian once said to John Eliot, "Why does not God kill the devil?" While we may not ask exactly the same question, we are all led to wonder why the Lord tolerates him. Why is he permitted to work against the Lord and man? A complete answer is not easily given, since we cannot see as God sees and understand as He understands. To bind and overthrow the old serpent by sheer force would not be the greatest victory over him. To lift man from earth to heaven without giving that man an opportunity to show his determination to overcome evil would not develop moral character and true manhood. While we may ponder again and again just why God permits this enemy to live and work against all righteousness, we may rest assured that God knows what is best for man, and that some day we shall see that even the work of the devil worked for the good of those that were faithful to the Savior.

#### OUR RELATION TO HIM

It is comforting to remember that Satan is not permitted to tempt us beyond our power to resist. While he is mighty in his work, he is in no sense so great nor so powerful as is our God. The Lord not only gives

us strength to resist the wicked one, but He also gives us His presence and power to aid us. James not only tells you to "resist the devil, and he will flee from you"; but he adds, "draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." He who is overcome by the great dragon is overcome because he refuses to accept the grace of God as found in Christ. Every man must decide for himself whether he will serve Christ or Satan. Sin is obeying God's enemy. The Lord is striving to save men from sin and death; the devil is striving to keep us in evil and away from eternal life. Two candidates seek our allegiance and service. Each must cast his own ballot, and he cannot escape voting.

In 1 John 3:8 we are told: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." When the sorcerer Elymas sought to turn a certain man from the faith, Paul called him a child of the devil. At one time Jesus told the Jews that their father was the devil. All this causes me to believe that, in the sight of God, the man who refuses to accept Christ and continues to serve Satan is the child and servant of the Great Dragon.

#### HIS DOOM

Those who harden their hearts against the pleading of the Holy Spirit and permit the slanderer to keep them away from the Master will meet the same end that their father meets. Our adversary is now at work, but ere long he will meet his doom. Destruction is on his path, and rapidly and surely he is being driven

to eternal ruin.

Jesus was manifested "that through death He might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil." Calvary was Satan's Waterloo. This is an age when he is especially active since he sees that his time is limited and that he must do all he can soon or it will be too late.

In his vision on the Isle of Patmos John had a view of a future time in the career of the arch enemy. Describing it, he wrote: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Following the thousand years of freedom from Satan there will come a season when he shall again oppose Christ and men. Then comes the doom described in the twentieth chapter, and tenth verse of Revelation: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Then heaven will come down earth to meet, and earth will rise heaven to greet. In that day all the ransomed sons and daughters of God, all who have fought against Satan and have been true to Christ, will begin to reign eternally in the blessed mansions above.

MAN

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor."—Psalm 8:3-5. (R. V.)

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them."—Genesis 2:27.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.—I John 1:8.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23.

"Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts."—Ephesians 4:18. (R. V.)

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God."—Romans 3:20.

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Romans 5:8.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—John 3:3.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."—I John 3:2.

## MAN

### MAN AS A MERE PHYSICAL BEING

“**W**HAT is man?” Often has that question been asked; and many are the answers that have been given. When David first asked it more than three thousand years ago, he was probably looking up into the Syrian sky on a starlight night. The silent depths, the inaccessible splendors, in the quiet of that beautiful night, impressed upon his soul the utter insignificance of man as a mere physical being, and led him to breathe forth that beautiful eighth Psalm. “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” This must ever be the impression left on the mind of the materialist, who looks upon man as an animal or as a certain amount of mere matter.

What is man when compared to other creatures? His bodily structure is similar to that of the other vertebrate animals, and he might be called one of the mammals, close akin to the mammalian order of Primates. But other creatures far excell him in strength, in swiftness of motion, in keenness of vision, and in the development of their sense, to say nothing of the per-

fection of their instincts. The lily of the field exceeds the glory of Solomon; the nightingale or the skylark, as the sky is thrilled with its notes, puts to shame the throat of man. By the side of an elephant or whale a man is a very small being.

Compared to the universe he is even smaller and more insignificant. If David uttered these words as he looked up into the sky three thousand years ago, long before we had our knowledge of modern astronomy, what emotions would thrill his soul were he to look into the heavens through the eyes of modern telescopes, and have millions of stars reflect their glory in his eyes?

Give man an idea of the size of the world, and then ask him what he thinks of a human being when compared to that world. Man is a mere speck, filling but a few cubic feet of space. Go up on some lofty mountain, and look down at a man. Before you reach the top he has become invisible. Somewhere in the hazy space below he stands, but in the presence of that mountain he is too small to be seen. What is a man when compared to a mountain.

Were it possible to reach the nearest heavenly body, the moon, and then look back to earth, we should find that the earth is so far away that it is no longer any larger than a mere ball. The earth is said to hold one billion, six hundred million people, and yet it does not begin to be covered by them. Then too there is a diameter of about eight thousand miles. Picture the insignificance of a human being along side that bulk of material.

But the world is one of the smaller planets. Look away to the sun, and ask what you are when compared to it. The astronomers tell us that it is 93,000,000 miles away. How far is that? Have you any idea? It is supposed to have a diameter 108 times that of the world, and the volume is about 1,300,000 times as great. A man would have to weigh about 9,000 pounds to be as large in proportion to the sun as he is to the earth. What is man?

The sun is far from being the largest star in the heavens. In the southern heavens there is a star called Alpha Centauri, which is estimated to be 19,111,000,000 miles from the sun. When I begin to trouble my mind with such an indescribable distance, along comes an astronomer and tells me that 61 Cygni is twice the distance of Alpha Centauri. When I tell him that it is useless to mention such distances to me, because I cannot begin to realize what they mean, he says Sirius is about 100 trillion miles away, and that it is about one trillion times as large as the world. Consider the size of the earth, and then imagine something one trillion times as large. What is a man when compared to the size of that star.

Yet Sirius is only one of the many millions of stars that have their place in the universe. The earth is but a grain of sand by the side of a large mountain when compared to the universe. When you have reached the end of all known stars you have by no means reached the end of the universe. So great is the universe that it is useless to try to compare it with our little world,

Would you get an idea of the size of the heavens? Read Richter's dream. In that dream God calls a man up into heaven, and then commands an angel to take him on a voyage through space. As they journey the writer describes the experiences as follows: "Depth was swallowed up in insurmountable height, height was swallowed up in depth unfathomable. On a sudden, as thus they rode from infinite to infinite, on a sudden, as thus they tilted over abysmal worlds, a mighty cry arose that systems more mysterious, that worlds more billowy, other light, other depths were coming, were near, were at hand. Then the man sighed and stopped, and shuddered and wept. His overladen heart uttered itself in tears, and he said: 'Angel, I will go no further, for the spirit of man acheth with infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God. Let me lie down, and hide me in the grave from the persecution of the Infinite, for end I see there is none.' And from all the listening stars that shone around there issued a choral voice: 'The man speaks truly! End is there none that ever yet we heard of.' 'End is there none?' the angel solemnly demanded; 'Is there indeed no end, and is this the sorrow that kills you?' But no voice answered that he might answer himself. Then the angel threw up his glorious hands to the heavens, saying, 'End is there none to the universe of God! Lo! also, there is no beginning.'" What is man?

Ask the scientist. If he sees no further than flesh and blood, he will take down his scales, lead you into

the laboratory, and show you twenty or more jars, filled with water, carbon, nitrates, phosphorus, and other chemicals. He will tell you that the average man is five feet four inches high and weighs about one hundred and forty pounds. The size of that one hundred and forty pounds when compared to the universe makes man nothing.

What is man when you compare the time he spends in this world with the endless ages of eternity? Take the years that Methuselah lived, and put them by the side of the years through which the eternal God has been keeping watch on the universe. They are as nothing. Viewed in that light we must inevitably be pessimists. King Edwin, of the Saxons, is said to have gathered his wise men to ask them their opinion of the Christian religion, when missionaries first went to England. An aged ealderman arose, and said: "So seems the life of a man as a sparrow's flight through this hall when one is sitting at meat in wintertide, the warm fire on the hearth, the icy rain storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes in the darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight."

What is man, if he is the creature of his environment and absolutely controlled by natural law? He is no better than a horse or dog. The law of gravitation takes him in charge the same as it does the clod of the field. Away with this pessimistic view of man! He

who looks upon man as a mere physical being, limited by the present, and predestinated to a certain course of conduct, makes man a mere atom, and throws a wet blanket of pessimism over the heart of every great soul.

#### MAN AS GOD CREATED HIM

What is man? He is more than a body of flesh and bones. There is an old Syrian fable of a young lion whose mother continually warned him to beware lest he meet a man. One day the young lion, overcome by curiosity decided to disobey the warning and started out to find a man. It met an elephant, and, seeing its great size, supposed it to be a man. He asked the elephant whether it were a man, and received a negative reply. Finally the lion came to a large oak and asked it whether it were a man. The tree replied that it was not, and then told the young king of the jungle that a man had cut down the large oak that now lay by its side. Looking upon that fallen tree the young animal thought that man must certainly be a large being. In a short time a woodman came to cut the fallen tree in pieces. Turning to the woodman, the young lion asked whether he could find a man. The reply was, "I am a man." Considering the small form of the woodman, the animal would not believe that he spoke the truth. Driving the wedge into the log, the man asked the lion to put his paw into the groove and help split the log. No sooner had the beast obeyed than the man hit the wedge with the axe, knocking it

out of the log, and making the lion a prisoner. Then the animal knew that it had met a man. The man was greater than the elephant, the oak, or the lion, because he had a mind and could reason. Animals may have instincts that surpass those of men; but in three thousand years the bee has not improved its cell, the beaver its dam, nor the spider its trap.

An animal may learn a trick, but it needs a man to teach it. An animal may love its young and even die for them; but it does not die for the young of other animals. A horse may remember; but man unites memory, reason, and imagination to rule the lower animals.

The human family is also greater than the world in which it lives. A stone or a world can never be great because it lacks the power of self-activity. Gibraltar may be large, but it is not really great because it cannot move itself. Standing in the presence of the mighty Niagara Falls, one may tremble at the thought of its power and beauty. But man is greater than Niagara; for he can span it, and, if he desired, he could destroy it in a very short time. Even now men are using part of what was formerly the falls to generate electricity. Humanity is now conquering every part of this great world. Through inventions it has chained the lightening and made electricity its obedient servant. Man has spoken to the seas, and they carry his vessels bearing fruit and grain to all parts of the world. He has spoken to the wind, and it turns his mills. He has spoken to the air, and it carries his aeroplane and

airships. Looking upon the mighty mountain, he says, "I am mightier than thou." He not only reaches its summit, but tunnels through its heart, and digs coal and other minerals out of its depths to warm his home and make implements to lighten his labour.

Is man small when compared with the universe? He is greater than the cold, dead universe. The sun is old and has great power, but it never thought, judged, nor reasoned. It cannot do what you and I can do. It never said, "I will," or, "I will not."

Man may seem small in the presence of time, space, and law; but he is greater than any of them. He simply lifts his hand, and says to the law of gravitation, "So far shalt thou go and no farther."

Man is the greatest thing in the universe because he is most like the God that created it. Science says that man is the goal of all creation. The Bible says that man was created in the image and likeness of the Almighty. The old philosopher was correct when he said: "The greatest star is the one standing at the little end of the telescope, the one looking, not looked at, nor looked for." But man is more than a star; he is the image of the Creator. May I say it reverently, yet earnestly—He is a young duplicate of the Lord. He is able to think, even if it is but a little, along the lines where God's thoughts run; able to have heart beats that are in tune with the power that throbs in the heart of the Eternal.

In the eighth Psalm we read: "Thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels." The

American Revised version renders it: "Thou hast made him but little lower than God." Some one has said that the gulf between man and matter is greater than the gulf between man and God. I am not ready to say that much; but man as God created him is the greatest thing in the universe, except the Trinity. Every one has that within himself that is dissatisfied with anything less than fellowship with the Creator.

What is man ? He is the child of the eternities. When the heavens and the earth are passed away, he will yet be young in his eternal existence. Yonder mountain may melt and pass into the place of forgetfulness, never more to be known; but the soul of man endures forever. This body of flesh may return to the earth from which it came, but man is more than clay. He is the image and likeness of the infinite God, the heir of the eternities, the crowning act of the ages, God's special care.

#### MAN AS SIN LEFT HIM

Such is man as God created him and wants him to be. But I am sorry to know that man is no longer as the Lord created him and wants him to be. The Scriptures tell us that he has fallen and is lost in sin. Who will deny it? Everywhere there are to be found the marks of iniquity. Great is the difference between man as he might be and man as he is. God gave him authority over all the lower forms of life; but through the curse of sin he is no longer able to govern himself.

He is a slave to the animal within his own bosom. Born a child of God, he has become a child of the devil. Given the image of the Creator, he now bears the image of the ruler of the realms of darkness. Created to enjoy constant joy and happiness, he is now the child of sorrow and gloom. Instead of walking with his head in the skies, he sees naught but the earth and walks with bowed head.

More than this, since sin has placed him under the condemnation of the law of God, he is without hope. He stands guilty before the eternal and immutable Judge of all men, his conscience condemning him. Instead of looking forward to an eternity of ascending blessedness, he looks into a dark and dismal future, because his own intellect tells him that his heart is unfit for the presence of God and eternal purity.

Ah, but some one reminds me that man is pretty good even when he is under the power of sin! I want to go on record as saying that I do not agree with the theory that holds to the extreme goodness of the very worst men. That theory is direct from hell, and its author is no other than the father of all lies. Place your life along side the Sermon on the Mount, and then boast of your goodness, if you can. Measured by the rule of conduct given by the Almighty we are wretched sinners.

The American nation is in many respects the best in the world; yet it is far from a paradise. Where is the Christian who would say that this country is what it ought to be? More than seventy per cent. of all

government revenue is spent on past wars, present war equipment, and preparation for future wars. How is that compared to the teachings of the Prince of Peace? Walk down the streets of our large cities, and you will find that many of the best corners are given over to the saloon and other institutions that curse rather than bless men. Is that ideal? Then consider the corruption in our political life. Add to that the social impurity that exists among practically all classes of society, until many reputable physicians despair of the future of the nation. Sin has blighted and withered the fragrant blossoms on the tree of righteousness and purity.

Do you remind me that this is a proof that man is of a low nature rather than of the royal nature portrayed in the preceding paragraphs? The very depths to which man has fallen is a proof of the height from which he has fallen. Only a great being can fall as men have fallen. A horse or a mountain have no choice in the matter; poor horse! poor mountain! The fall of man is the greatest tragedy in the universe because he was made for better things.

#### MAN THE REDEEMED CHILD OF GOD

The only ray of hope is found in the fact that he need not remain under the curse of sin. He may be depraved with no power to rise, apart from the grace of God; but deep down in the human heart there is a spark that may be turned into a flame of righteousness by the Holy Spirit. It may lie smouldering in the ashes of sin and wickedness; but, fanned by the grace



of God, it becomes a flame of power. Oh, that we might be able to look into the face of every fallen member of the race, and see this! "Down in the human heart, Crush'd by the tempter, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore; Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness, Chords that were broken will vibrate once more." It matters not how far the individual may have fallen, the grace of God can restore him.

Oh, what a change! What a world of difference between a redeemed soul and a soul in sin! We get an idea of the greatness of that change when we consider how the devil tries to hold the man and how Jesus died to save him. What is the value of a saved man or woman? Tell me what it cost God to send His only begotten Son into the world to suffer and die that He might save men from sin and Satan; and I will begin to tell you the difference between a lost man and a saved one.

The Redeemed man is the Lord's special care. God is in a special sense his Father. No less than sixty times did our Savior mention this glorious truth. When the Lord is permitted to lift a man out of sin He works a transformation greater than the spring sun works in the winter landscape. Notice Silas Marner when George Eliot first introduces him to us, and then study him in those last scenes. Victor Hugo with commendable skill shows us the fallen Jean Valjean, and then portrays the wonderful difference after the higher nature assumes control; but he has not overdrawn the picture of a fallen man redeemed through the precious

blood of Christ. The hardened man or woman of sin is metamorphosed into the saintly man or women of righteousness.

Man redeemed is the crowning work of creation, the greatest jewel in the earthly diadem. Ephesians 2:10, in the Greek New Testament, tells us that redeemed men and women are God's poems. What is a poem? "It is the finest flower of the finest mind." Poems are generally used to express that which is too lofty for prose. The ransomed individual is God's poem. He is in harmony with the Infinite. He is the object toward which the thoughts of the Almighty have been turned from the ages before the foundation of the world, if we are to believe what Paul says in his matchless writings. The highest and the deepest emotions of the Lord are expressed in man washed from the stain and guilt of sin. It has well been said: "The true Christian is God's poem in a world of prose; God's beauty in a world of gloom; God's fine and finished art in a world where men forget beauty, and are careless of moral symmetry and spiritual grace."



## THE CHURCH

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matthew 16: 16-18.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church; let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."—Matthew 18:17.

"Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any other such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."—Ephesians 5:25-27.

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—Acts 2:47.

"And he is the head of the body, the church."—Colossians 1:18.

"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God?"—I Corinthians 11:22.

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."—Acts 9:31.

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."—I Cor. 12:28.

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before the throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."—Revelation 1:4-5.

## THE CHURCH

**T**HE Old Roman Symbol, one of the oldest, if not the most ancient creed known to the Christian world, says, "I believe in the holy Church." Later that clause was put into the so-called Apostles Creed, but changed to read: "I believe in the holy catholic Church." The word catholic was at first used to define the universal church. Practically all creeds and confessions of faith since that day have given a prominent place to the church. This is just as it should be. Notwithstanding all assertions to the contrary, what a man believes about the church has much to do with his religious life.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH

The first recorded mention our Lord made of the church is found in Matthew 16:16-18. The Jews failing to recognize Him as the Messiah, had rejected Him. Taking the disciples aside, Jesus asked them what men were saying about Him. Some called Him John the Baptist, others Elias, and others Jeremiah, and still others spoke of Him as one of the other prophets. These were the views of the best members of the Hebrew synagogues, and were evidence that Jesus could not establish His kingdom through the Jewish organizations. He then asked the disciples whom they con-

sidered Him to be. Answering for the Twelve, Peter said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In this answer was found the penetrating knowledge that would enable our Lord to carry out His plans for the salvation of men. It was not human wisdom, but a revelation from the Father. Turning to Peter, Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Son of Jonas: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Then came the first mention of the church: "Upon this rock I will build My Church." Christ was about to establish a church—His own church.

The Christian Church superseded the Hebrew people as the channel through which the Lord was to work for the salvation of the race. Jesus attended the synagogues and Temple and through them tried to advance His kingdom; but He saw that this was impossible. Therefore He planned an organization separate from the Hebrew places of worship.

The followers of the Lord should ever keep in mind that the church was founded by the Master. It is no new thing to meet a person who argues that Jesus never planned to have a church organization. How can any one read that He told Peter he was going to found a church and at the same time claim that Christ never had an idea of founding one? Jesus knew better than we know that it is impossible to work successfully in any great undertaking without an organization. True it is that only on two recorded occasions Christ spoke of the church, the first at the time of Peter's confes-

sion, the second when he instructed them how to correct a brother who was at fault. After telling them to try to be reconciled in the presence of two or more witnesses, He added: "And if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." These two references are all we need. Do they not both suggest that Jesus had spoken of the church before? Probably the writers of the Gospels were so well acquainted with organization that they felt all men ought to have intelligence enough to realize the need of a church to carry on the work of the Lord.

The Greek word that Our Lord used when He spoke of the church was "Ecclesia," which means the assembly or the called out. The Hebrews looked upon themselves as a separate and chosen people, called out of the nations. The institution that Jesus founded consists of those who have been called out of sin into the service of the Master.

For several very evident reasons Christ would not form a large church. In the first place, He had only a few followers whom He could use as He wanted to use them. He lacked the people necessary to form a large society. In the second place, He had to spend His time training those few before He could use them for definite work. Even after the crucifixion they failed to see the full meaning of His life and works. It took the resurrection and the ascension, yea, Pentecost itself to give them full knowledge of what the life and death of Jesus meant for them and the world.

As soon as the Pentecostal flame fell upon them, they began to form the church in a fuller sense. The very first day several thousand were added. Then we are told that the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved. Is it logical to suppose that they were added to a church that had not been formed before that day? Shortly after Pentecost we find the apostles at Jerusalem calling the members together to select deacons. Wherever Paul went he tried to effect an organization of the church. In the different epistles the word church is found about one hundred times. Thus it is evident that to the early disciples the church was a vital power.

A good name for the Book of Acts is "The Church in Action." There one can get a good idea of what the apostles and early disciples felt the church ought to be. It was democratic in government. The apostles on account of their close relation with Christ were given special prominence; but in almost all movements the principles of self-government prevailed. Even the choice of a successor to Judas was not left to the eleven; but was submitted to the whole church. The seven deacons or stewarts were chosen by the entire church. The relation of the Jews and Gentiles in the great controversy was determined by a council of the whole church held at Jerusalem. The plan was to give each member a voice.

The second mark was difference of organization and difference of plan. While each held to the fundamentals of the faith, each church in a special way suited

itself to the people with whom it had to deal. Jews were not compelled to become Gentiles, nor were Gentiles compelled to become Jews. In this day we hear much criticism of the church because there are so many different denominations. Narrow-minded men claim that the church ought to agree so that there would be but one denomination. On the same basis the citizens of this country ought to so agree that there would be but one large state, or that each state would have a constitution exactly like every other state. Different denominations destroy the unity of the church no more than different states destroy the unity of the nation. I am in favor of all the unity that is possible in the church; but I find no fault with the church because men and women of different views and different dispositions cannot agree on non-essentials; I see no reason why people of the same temperament should not band together. The early church and the church of today was united in purpose and in spirit.

Let us not make the mistake of supposing that the church of nineteen centuries ago is an inflexible model for this day. We ought to hold to the essentials of that day, but plan for the day in which we live. If we live in a day when we show friendship by shaking hands, it is not required of us that we kiss every man and woman in the church to show that we are brethren. We need the same spirit of brotherhood that characterized that membership, but we should demonstrate it in nineteenth-century terms.

It is in the epistles of Paul that the word church is

used more than in all the other books of the Bible. He speaks of the church under three figures of speech. Husband and wife in their relation of love and unity are used to bring to our minds the relation of Christ to the church. The church is called the Bride. In Revelation we find the same expression where it is called "The bride, the wife of the Lamb." This shows how dear is the church to the heart of the Master. At another place it is represented as a spiritual building of which believers are the living stones and Christ the chief corner stone. The third figure is that of the body of Christ. He is the head, and we are all members of the body. Each member is to do his work that the body may be complete in all its parts. All these figures show the close relation of Christ to this institution. So intimate is this relation that where two or three are gathered together in His name there is He in the midst to bless.

If you are ever tempted to think lightly of this institution, remember that Jesus founded it, and that the very last message to men, the Book of Revelation, was sent to the seven churches of Asia Minor. The church is so near and dear to the heart of Christ that he who dishonors it dishonors Him.

#### ITS RELATION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD: OR ITS PURPOSE

Those who fail to honor the church generally do so on account of a false view of its relation to the kingdom of God. Jesus spoke of the kingdom oftener than

He spoke of the church. To establish His kingdom among men was the purpose of His life and work in the world. His teaching was chiefly concerned with establishing it in the hearts of men. This has led many to suppose that the church and kingdom are identical, and to say that there is only one true church, the invisible church established in the hearts of all who become children of God. The kingdom is established in the hearts of all who have been washed in the precious blood of Christ. But there is a vast difference between the church and the kingdom. I agree that only saved men and women can belong to the latter, but every now and then unsaved people work their way into the church visible. To rebut the argument that Jesus never recognized the church that has unsaved persons in its membership it is but necessary to turn to the Book of Revelation and read the first three chapters. There Christ through the angel said that He had something against some of the churches because they permitted sinners to hold prominent places, and because they had lost that zeal that should characterize members of the bride of Christ.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the church is opposed to the kingdom of God, or of honoring the former at the expense of the latter. Jesus never magnified the one at the expense of the other. The man who dishonors the church dishonors the kingdom of God and opposes the work of the Lord. It is the church against which Christ says the gates of hell shall not prevail. It is the church that the apostle says

Christ purchased with His own blood.

It is the agency through which Jesus is to establish His kingdom in the hearts and lives of men. Would I be putting it too strongly by saying that it would be impossible to bring the kingdom for which Christ prayed without the church to lead the work? History at least suggests this. The life of Christianity has been transmitted from generation to generation through it.

#### ITS GLORIOUS RECORD

Consider what the bride of Christ has done for the salvation of the world. No man need be ashamed of the record of the institution that Jesus founded for the salvation of the race. It might have done more, but it has a record that surpasses that of any other organization. Nineteen hundred years ago when the Savior ascended into heaven after giving the disciples the task of ushering in the kingdom, there were only a few hundred Christians in all the world, and they were despised and practically unknown. In those early days the followers of Christ were considered uncultured and uncouth, slaves and unimportant members of society. Neither society nor government gave them recognition.

Gradually the leaven began to work, and the church became a leader in all progress and civilization. To-day the few hundred have become a few hundred millions. To the doors of the church come kings, emperors, subjects and servants, cultured and unlet-

tered, rich and poor, young and old. To the leaders of world progress it appears as the advocate of all that is true and best. Where is there an intelligent man who is ashamed to be seen in a church? Is it a dishonor to be a member of the bride of Christ? Ask the chief executive of this land, ask the leaders in all departments of life what they think about it.

Growth in numbers is not the greatest glory that belongs to the church. Consider what it has done for the world. There is scarcely a wholesome factor in our boasted civilization which is not directly or indirectly received from this institution. There are other agencies placed over against the church, but in most instances they receive their life through it. Every now and then it is claimed that the lodge takes the place of the church in many lives. To the shame of many so-called Christians it must be said that they show more loyalty to the secret societies of which they are members than they do to the church. They will miss a church service to attend a meeting of the order. Let us remember that no matter how good the lodge may be it is of human origin, while the church was founded by the Son of God. If the lodge is one of the best it owes its power to this institution; but in no instance is it as good as the latter institution. It may pay dues when the church does not; but it pays dues only to its own members. If that is the only virtue that it has, it is little better than a mere business organization such as a life insurance or accident association. I believe that the best in any secret order is found in the religious prin-

ciples for which it stands; and they are the children of the church. All the secret societies in the world have never done one-thousandeth as much for society as has the church of Christ.

Do you remind me that the church has been guilty of many faults in the past? Do you recall the dark days of the Reformation? Yes, some of the members of the church have not been free from grievous errors in the past. Yet I contend that it is the best institution of all the ages. It should ever be remembered that it does not save a man, but develops him in the religious life. If he enters the church unsaved, that is the man's fault, and not the fault of the church. It is her duty to educate and persuade, not to believe for nor choose for the individual. Magnify all the errors of the past, if you will; but you cannot escape the fact that this is the greatest and best organization in the world in this or any other day.

It is a venerable institution. In founding it Jesus said the gates of hell should not prevail against it. During these nineteen centuries enemies have presented themselves and have made their extravagant claims. Empires, rulers, sceptics, and ungodly men of every class have done their worst to destroy Zion; but they have only strengthened her. Today she stands more glorious than in any day of the past. Nations, rulers, and the leading men of every clime pay her homage, because she stands for all that is highest and best.

Were the church destroyed today, tomorrow men would have to rebuild it for their own salvation.

Remove her from the world, and the world would realize on a larger scale what France experienced when she substituted infidelity and human reason for the church and religion.

#### EVERY ONE OUGHT TO BE A MEMBER OF SOME CHURCH

Every saved man and woman ought to become a member of some branch of the church. We owe it our support for what it has done for us in the past. There is no one in the neighborhood who does not receive some benefit from the house of God. Like the school house it ministers to the entire community. In the hour of death it comes to bury our dead, and to offer the comfort and consolation of the Gospel. In the Sunday school it trains our children in the fundamentals of the higher life. If we owe all that is best in our modern civilization to it, how can we feel that we do not owe it our support? The best way to give it that is to extend it our influence by becoming a member.

Were it not true that we owe a debt to Zion, the best place to make our lives count for the most is in the institution that Jesus founded for the salvation of the world. Membership in it unites the individual with the forces that make for righteousness; it associates him with the friends of the Lord, not with the enemies of Christ. Very little permanent work is done by any band of Christians who do not unite with some branch of the visible church.

But the chief reason why every child of God should join this organization is because he needs it to make his own life what it ought to be. Religion is a principle of association. The foundation principle of the Christian religion is love, which is of necessity a social bond, a brotherhood. No man can live the highest type of Christian life and wilfully isolate himself from his fellows. When we become disciples of Christ we must recognize His other disciples. To be a friend of His we must admit His friends into our friendship. To be a servant of His we must acknowledge and cooperate with all those who like ourselves are striving to do His will and advance His kingdom. Union with Jesus means union with His brethren. It is not enough to mingle with them in the house of the Lord. We ought to join with them in their efforts to have the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven above. We can only do this fully when we become members of the church and make its interests our interests.

#### CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

This brings us to requirements for admission into the church. What should be the conditions of church membership? Should it be strict or should it be loose and easy? This is an age when the tendency is to make everything as easy as possible. Some churches are letting down the bars and admitting all who come, no matter what they believe or what they do not believe. Is this as it ought to be, or as Christ would have it were He pastor of a church? The only way to

answer this question is to find what the Bible teaches: for there alone do we have revealed the will of the Lord. To it we must turn for all that is vital in our creeds and confessions of faith.

What is the plan that Jesus teaches in the New Testament? Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Christ replied that the confession was the result of a revelation from the Father, and added: "Upon this rock I will build My church." On the basis of the confession that He was the Son of God was the church founded. The New Testament recognizes no church that does not accept Christ as Lord. No one should be admitted into a Christian church until he professes his belief in the deity of Christ, and surrenders his life to the Savior for purity and guidance.

Having accepted Jesus as Lord, the next thing required is a consistent religious life. He who would follow Christ must take up his cross. He must take up his cross and show the world that he has been with Jesus and has learned of Him. Take up his cross! What do we mean by taking up the cross? Many imagine that they take up their cross when they do some special service or make some sacrifice for the Master. For Christ the cross meant no more and no less than death. He who takes up his cross dies to self and lives anew for the Savior. The Lord's will is his will and guidance.

Do not understand me to say that each member of the church professes absolute perfection. Zion is not

an organization of faultless men and women. We do not join it on account of our goodness, but because we want to be better and help others to be better. The man who waits until he is good enough to join the church will never join it. The man who accepts Christ as His Lord and then tries to live a consistent religious life is fit to join the church.

#### THE IDEAL CHURCH

What is the ideal church? It is a church sound in doctrine, holding to the deity of Christ, and the integrity of the Scriptures, and making the Bible the rule in faith and practice. It is a church pure in life, trying to show the world that the members have been with Jesus and have learned of Him the fine art of right living. It is a church that combines organization and spiritual power generated through the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is a church that is faithful in individual effort in soul winning and religious growth. Above all, it is a church that depends upon the Lord for guidance and power.

Members of the church of Christ, permit me to congratulate you on the high privilege that is yours! What more can you ask than to know that you are working with the Master in the divinest institution the world has ever known? Angels might well envy you your exalted calling. What manner of persons ought you to be, seeing the high honor that is yours and the

mighty destinies that are conditioned upon your faithfulness! Be true to the Lord by being true to His church.

Church of the living God, how can I forget thee! I had not known the inexpressible joys of sins forgiven had it not been for thy fragrant influence. Had it not been for thee, I had not known the joys of fellowship with my Master and the best men and women of the ages. Permit me to labor for thy glory, and through thee for the glory of my Savior, until the angel of death shall kiss my soul away to mansions above. If I forget thee, O Church of Christ, let my right hand forget its cunning! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not.



## A CHRISTIAN

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—Romans 3:23.

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."—Galatians 3:10.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—John 3:3-8.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."—2 Corinthians 5:17.

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—Acts 16:30-31.

"These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God."—I John 5:13 (R. V.)

"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."—I Peter 1:15-16.

"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."—2 Timothy 1:12.

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."—I Corinthians 10:13.

## A CHRISTIAN

**T**HIS chapter brings us to the greatest question that any man can ask: "What does it mean for me to be a Christian?" All other questions amount to little, unless they make real the personal salvation of man. It profits us nothing to study about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Satan, the Church, and other themes, if they do not lead us to salvation.

Every man ought to be a Christian, because without Christ he cannot reach the highest and best in life. A plant may grow in a cellar, but its life will be different if you bring it to the open sky and the sunshine. The non-Christian life is like a plant in a cellar. In addition to the eternal reward that comes to the child of God there are riches in this world that come only to saved men and women.

Many who attend church, to say nothing of those outside the house of God, have no real knowledge of what it means to be a Christian. For that reason I pen this chapter, which may seem commonplace to some, but which may, I trust, meet a definite need in the lives of others.

### FALSE VIEWS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

The name Christian is often used in a loose sense that destroys its full significance. In certain parts of

the world different religions prevail ; and just as a man who is born in France of French parents is called a Frenchman, so the child of Mohammedan parents is called a Mohammedan, and a child born in a Christian country of Christian parents is called a Christian. For instance, we say the citizens of the United States are Christians. Any one who is acquainted with our American life will realize the fallacy of such a statement. Far from all the men and women in this fair land are saved people. Birth in a Christian country, among religious people, is no guarantee of salvation.

Nor can it be said that conduct is the distinctive mark of the saved individual. When, as in this country, society has for many generations been formed upon a Christian model, not only those who are Christians, but all respectable persons have a certain elevated standard of conduct. So you cannot easily argue from conduct to religious character. There is a vast difference between a moral man and a religious man. An individual may be a good moral man and not be a Christian ; but he cannot be a good Christian and not be a moral man. Good works have never saved a single individual, for there has never lived the man whose life was good enough to fulfill all the law of God. The church has more admiration for the moral man than for the open sinner ; but it pities him ; for he is far from the kingdom of God, and, like the Pharisee, fails to realize it, thinking that his self-righteousness prepares him for the heavenly mansions.

A view that might be called a twin brother of the

moral idea is the supposition that a man may become a Christian through education. The Bible tells us to grow in grace, but not to grow into grace. A man may grow in the religious life, but he cannot grow into it. A grain of wheat may grow after it has been planted in the earth, but it must be in the ground before it can grow there. Solomon was correct when he said: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is an easy matter to train the young vine to climb upward; but as the vine becomes older it is difficult to turn it in the opposite direction. I believe in all legitimate efforts to train the youth in right conduct; but that training in itself is by no means an assurance of salvation. In many instances the children of pious parents are a disgrace to themselves and all who know them. In the final analysis the parent does not decide for the child. The best educated men are not always the children of God; but in many instances deep-dyed sinners. When the Philippian gaoler asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, they did not reply: "Become educated, and thou shalt be saved."

Had we been in Paul's place, the inquirer might have been instructed to go to church and observe the Hebrew rites. While every true child of God delights in going to the services in the sanctuary, no man is made a Christian by simply going to church services. He may go to the house of God on the Sabbath, and live like a demon the other six days of the week. He may recite his daily prayers, and in his speech and con-

duct blaspheme the name of the Almighty. More than one person went to church almost every week of his life, and at the end realized that he was not prepared to meet the great Judge.

This was not because he went to church, and was unable to believe all the doctrines taught there. There are those who seem to feel that they are Christians because they accept the fundamental truths of the Gospel. James tells us that the demons, or devils, also believe and tremble. Perhaps they believe every article of the Christian creed and are more orthodox than most members of the church. To have the most exact and distinct knowledge of the way to San Francisco does not take a man there. The clearest knowledge of what the Scriptures teach does not save the individual. Let no man make the fatal mistake of thinking that because he believes that Jesus died for the salvation of lost men and women that he is therefore saved from his sin.

How about the man who accepts all the fundamentals of the faith, joins the church, and is regular in his attendance? He who becomes a Christian will in almost every instance unite with some branch of the visible church. The disciples of our Lord are not to hide their light under a bushel, but to place it on a candlestick so that all may be helped by the fragrant influence of their religious example and conduct. It is difficult to understand how a man may do his best for the world without becoming part of some religious organization. At the same time, a man may join a

hundred churches and still be unsaved. Paul did not tell the jailor to unite with any religious institution. Indeed, the probability is that the keeper of the Philippian prison was a member of the Jewish church, and may have taken an active part in the services of the synagogue. The rich young ruler was undoubtedly a member of some Hebrew religious organization; but Jesus told him that he lacked one thing that was absolutely necessary in the life of a disciple.

Furthermore, a man may reform and still not be a Christian. Paul did not tell the jailor to quit swearing and stealing. Jesus did not say to the ruler of the Pharisees: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man reform and quit a few of his great sins, he shall not enter the kingdom of God." Revival workers often meet sinners who excuse themselves from not becoming Christians by saying that they are trying to be better. My brother, you will never reach heaven on that path. There is not a single promise in the Bible that gives any man a hope of eternal life as a reward for trying to be a little better. A ship is out on the ocean with four or five holes in its side and in danger of sinking. Does the one in charge of the vessel try to save it by trying to stop one or two of the holes? When he reaches the harbor does he repair a few of the leaks and leave the remainder as they are? Not if he is a sensible individual! It takes but one leak to sink a ship. It takes but a single sin to make a man a sinner and keep him out of the kingdom of God. It took only one act of disobedience to drive our first par-

ents out of Eden. It takes but one broken link to destroy the strength and usefulness of a chain. It takes but one transgression to break the law of God and to bring down the curse that falls upon the ungodly or lawless. No man ever became a Christian by merely reforming. No man ever paid his old debts by merely paying what he bought after he had contracted those debts. Reformation does not keep out of all present sin, were it possible to eliminate all past shortcoming.

#### WHAT IT MEANS TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

To Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That is God's part in making a man a Christian. A man is a Christian only when God makes him one. Without the help of the Lord no man can ever be saved. He can do his part, and must do his part, but even then he is compelled to depend upon the Lord to work a transformation in his heart and life. The Christian is a man who is born again, not of flesh and blood, but of water and the Spirit.

Man is by nature sinful. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. With David we must say: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Man must be born of the flesh to enter this

world. He must be born of the Spirit of God to enter the kingdom of God. If a man is to inherit eternal life, he must have something in his heart akin to eternal life. Born of the flesh man is compelled to taste death. Born of the Spirit of life he is limited only by eternity.

Do you ask the meaning of the new birth? I confess that you will not get the definition or explanation from me. Jesus said that as we cannot explain the wind, just so we cannot explain the new birth. It is not ours to ask how man is born again; but it is ours to know whether he can be born again. We do not worry so much about how the wind blows; but what we want to know is whether it is blowing. How do we know that? We see results.

Saul starting out one morning as a bitter persecutor of the followers of Christ, his heart on fire with hatred for Jesus and His disciples, breathing out slaughter and threatenings. Before sunset he was so changed that he fell on his knees and prayed to the crucified Nazarene, and rejoiced to be numbered among the followers of the Christ. He was the same in bodily form; but he was a totally different man in his spiritual dispositions. He was born anew.

Becoming a Christian means putting off the old and putting on the new. Paul speaks of putting off the old man of the flesh and putting on the new man of the Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we read: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." To become a Christian means to receive the Spirit of Christ,

so that the spiritual is dominant in us. A man then is a Christian not because of anything he does, but because of what he is. His heart is regenerated—changed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He is changed within himself, in his relation to his fellow men and in his relation to God. In his unregenerated state man is self-centered, and alienated from the Lord. In his new life he is united to God in Christ as the vine is joined to the branches. He no longer lives, but Christ lives in him.

#### WHAT MUST I DO TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

While each must depend wholly upon the Lord for the transformation of heart that alone makes a man a Christian, there are certain things that each man must do for himself before the Lord can save him. To the Philippian gaoler who cried to Paul and Silas: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul answered: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

This leads us to inquire what is included in that word "believe." Preparing the way for the Savior, John the Baptist told the people to repent that their sins might be blotted out. Jesus took up the same word and told the Jews to repent for the kingdom of God was at hand. Peter repeatedly called upon the Hebrews to repent. The very first step in believing on Christ is repentance. The first step in repentance is a conviction of sin, a knowledge that we are all

under the curse of the law and deserving of present and future punishment. Christ came not to call the righteous (those who feel they are righteous), but sinners to repentance. Before any man can be saved he must realize that in the sight of a just and holy God he is a sinner, and doomed to everlasting death. Realizing that he has broken the divine law and is under condemnation, he must feel sorry that he is in that condition and wish that he were better.

It is not enough to wish, however. With the sense of sin and sorrow for sin there must come a determination to leave it. Repentance has two sides, the sorrow for sin and the determination to forsake it. A man must not only wish he had not broken the law of the Lord, but he must also seek forgiveness.

Having been convicted of sin, and desiring to experience forgiveness, the next step is to trust in Christ for that forgiveness. It is not enough to believe that He lived and that He was the only begotten Son of God, nor is it sufficient to believe that there is pardon through His shed blood. What we need is a faith that enables us to surrender ourselves into his care and depend upon Him for pardon, a faith that causes us to go to Christ and say: "Here am I, take me, and use me in any way that Thou wilt." To exercise the faith that saves is to surrender self and one's own will, and trust Jesus for guidance and blessing. Must a man go to the altar or inquiry room to be saved? That all depends upon whether he is willing to go or not. If he is too proud to kneel at an altar of prayer, or

to make a public confession, he will hardly be saved before he loses that pride. He must trust the Lord enough to go where He would have him go, do what He would have him do, and be what He would have him be.

In the final analysis the whole matter turns upon whether a man really wants to be saved or not. If he sees himself in all his sin and wretchedness as the omniscient God sees him, and is really sorry for his sin, he will be willing to surrender fully into the hands of the Lord, and do whatsoever the Savior asks him to do, even if it is shaking hands with and asking the forgiveness of one who has been an enemy for years. Whenever an individual is willing and anxious to be saved, Jesus is anxious to save him. I believe that a man is a Christian as soon as he surrenders wholly into the hands of the Master.

Here we meet with the question of personal experience at the time of conversion or regeneration. Many persons are dissatisfied with their experience because it is not exactly like what some one else had enjoyed. One man sees heaven opened and the glory of God descending with supernatural radiance. Another has a quiet experience that is simply taking Jesus at His word. The man with the extraordinary vision tells the other man his experience; and that man begins to doubt whether he is saved since he did not realize what the other realized. We read that Saul was thrown to the earth by a glory that surpassed that of the mid-day sun, and that he heard a voice from heaven. Oh,

how men wish they had a similar experience! "Are we saved since we failed to have such a revelation of supernatural power?"

The manner or time of regeneration is of minor importance. What each needs most is to be able to say with a certain blind man: "Whereas I was blind I now see." Ask Bartimeus how Christ restores the sight of the blind. He replies: "I was sitting by the wayside talking with a friend about Jesus who cured blind men. Just then Jesus came down the road with a multitude following Him. I stood, and cried, 'Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' He spoke a word; and I was cured instantaneously." Ask the blind man at the pool how Christ restores sight to the blind. He answers: "I could see nothing, when He met me. He spat on the ground, and then mixing clay with the spittle, put it on my eyes, and told me to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. I went and washed, and was healed as I put the water to my eyes." Ask another blind man how the Master restored his sight. He replies: "Jesus put his hands on me, and told me to look. First I saw men as trees walking. Again the Savior put His hands on me, and told me to look. I looked; and, behold, He had given me full power to see as other men saw." Different was the manner in which they received their sight. Had the one man a right to argue that the others were still blind because they were not cured as was he? One thing they all knew—they had been blind, and Jesus gave them sight. That was the all-important knowledge that they need-

ed and wanted. The only thing we need to know is that we were sinners, and we surrendered to Christ, Who forgave us all our transgressions, and presented to us the witness that we are the children of the kingdom, born anew by the Spirit of God.

Some people are demonstrative; some are emotional, and laugh and cry easily. Others are cold and staid, and will not laugh even in the presence of the most ridiculous situation in the world. When the emotional man is regenerated he naturally has his emotions stirred. When the sedate and formal man is converted he is generally quiet and composed in his confession of faith. God takes each man's disposition, and uses it for that particular man's good. You do not laugh, cry, nor talk exactly like everybody else. You have your own peculiarities. Why should you expect the Lord to work on your calm and dignified nature as He works on the emotional nature of your open-hearted neighbor? Do not worry about the outward signs of your regeneration. Be certain that you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; and permit God to take care of your feelings and experiences. It is yours to make the full surrender and take the Savior at His word, which is that whosoever believes shall be saved. It is the Redeemer's task to regenerate your heart and give you the witness within.

#### AFTER REGENERATION WHAT?

Regeneration is only the beginning of the Christian life. The trouble with too many followers of Christ

is that they seem to feel all they need to do is accept Jesus as their Savior from past sin; but that is by no means the only step to be taken by the candidate for life eternal.

Jesus says that he who would be a disciple must take up his cross and follow the Lord. Take up his cross! What does that mean? Many make the mistake of supposing that to take up the cross is to make some special sacrifice or perform some disagreeable task. In the Scriptures the cross stands for death. When our Lord took up His cross it was on Calvary to die for the sins of the world. We take up our cross when we die to self and live in Christ; when we place self on the altar and give our all into the service of the Master. From the day of his conversion the Christian should ask, not what he enjoys most, but what Jesus would have him do and say. He is bought with a price, the precious blood of the Son of God. Therefore the Christian is not his own; but he belongs to the Lord for service. Paul called himself a bond servant or slave of Jesus Christ.

There is a theory that the word "Christian" originally was the diminutive of the word "Christ" and meant "a little Christ." This is based on the idea that the people who first gave the disciples that name saw such a resemblance between the Master they portrayed and their own lives that they ought to be called little christs. In other words, they showed in their daily walk and conversation that they had been with Jesus and had learned of Him the fine art of right living.

Men are not saved through their good works; but they do good deeds and live an upright life because they are saved. The true Christian will show his changed nature in his daily conduct.

The religious life is possible through trust in the Savior. Do not worry about keeping faithful. Often, too often, do men say that they would like to become Christians, but they fear they cannot keep religion. No man is a Christian because he keeps anything. Hear a parable: "There is a boy whose father was buried a short time ago. He is wearing his father's gold watch. Some thieves are trying to get it from him. He is struggling to keep it, but is about to lose it, when I come up and say: 'Give it to me, my boy; I'll take it and keep it for you.' For a moment he looks at me with doubtful eye; but I say to him, 'Trust me', and he sees that I am sincere and in earnest. He hands the watch over to me, and I save him from being robbed because I have the power to foil the robbers." Let that watch represent your religion and the boy yourself. Take the robbers as the enemies of your soul that are trying to rob you of your eternal salvation. Christ asks you to give your soul into His care because He is able to gain the victory over all the enemies of your soul. He is stronger than all your enemies combined, and will preserve you unto that day when you will stand in the presence of the Great Judge of all the earth, Who will send the Christians into eternal joy and the sinners into eternal night. Paul surrendered his life unto Christ, and then wrote: "I know whom

I have believed (trusted), and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

Your personal interests, as well as your eternal joy and blessedness, call upon you to become a Christian of the first order. Christ stands with open arms, asking you to surrender yourself into His care that He may give you a new heart, which is the guarantee of eternal life. Become a Christian, and then live so that the world may see by your daily life that you have been born anew and that you are a member of the kingdom of God.





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